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ABSTRACT

This report presents findings of an evaluation of Further Education Unit (FEU) REPLAN projects, an initiative to improve educational opportunities for unemployed adults in Great Britain. Chapter 1 describes the origins of REPLAN and the evaluation methodology. Chapter 2 gives an analytic and descriptive overview of the 21 FEU REPLAN projects. Project characteristics are reviewed, the projects are described briefly with a number of critical and evaluative observations attached, and a few general and more speculative analyses are made of project characteristics. Chapter 3 presents results of an evaluation of the aims of the REPLAN projects. It outlines areas in which the program has made progress and areas that merit further funding. A model for outreach is suggested. Chapter 4 remarks on the efficiency of the REPLAN projects. These aspects are considered: project selection, negotiation, and initial phases; project management; staff selection and supervision; role of steering committees; project research, needs analysis, surveys, monitoring, and evaluation; report writing; and role of FEU development officers. Chapter 5 presents interim and indicative findings of the efficacy of the REPLAN projects. Discussion focuses on advisory consultation, intended outcomes, transferability, self-rating by projects on transferability, local continuity and efficacy, and dissemination. Chapter 6 makes conclusions and recommendations. Appendices provide 11 references, a list of REPLAN projects, evaluation methodology and participants, and the FEU curriculum model. (YLB)

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An Evaluation of the FEU REPLAN Programme

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REPLAN

- [ ] **REPLAN is a programme to promote the development of education opportunities for the adult unemployed.**
- [ ] **REPLAN aims to help those who provide education by identifying and publicising the most effective ways and means of meeting the educational needs of the unemployed, and by encouraging closer collaboration between the various providing agencies.**
- [ ] **The programme is funded by the Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office; certain elements of the programme are also supported financially by the Training Agency. On behalf of REPLAN, the FEU and the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) are managing complementary programmes of development projects and NIACE is employing and managing an advisory team of field officers led by a national co-ordinator.**
- [ ] **Staff development programmes are being organised by NIACE in collaboration with the Regional Advisory Councils for further education, with participants drawn from a wide range of institutions and agencies in the statutory and voluntary sectors.**
- [ ] **Education Support Grants have been allocated to many local education authorities to strengthen the planning and co-ordination of provision for unemployed adults in their areas.**
- [ ] **For further information on REPLAN, contact:**

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An Evaluation of the FEU REPLAN Programme

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Thanks are due particularly to the FEU REPLAN project directors and workers. We received considerable co-operation and help, often at short notice. We are also very grateful for the willing participation of those invited to the advisory consultation.

Martin Johnson, FEU development officer, provided invaluable support and information throughout the project, as did his present and former colleagues, Elizabeth Weightman, Philip Barnard and Maggie Chadwick. The advice of the project's steering committee (details in Appendix 3) was always pertinent and well considered.

Keith Percy

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FOREWORD

This report of an evaluation of FEU's early work in REPLAN will reach you as a further evaluation of FEU REPLAN is about to begin. It is thus a historical record for the FEU and its messages have largely been incorporated into the current programme.

The report deals frankly with aims, efficiency and efficacy. Overall, it concludes that the FEU REPLAN programme represents value for money and has led to significant advances in the field of curriculum development for unemployed adults, some of which have had immediately observable practical effects at local level.

The FEU is grateful to Keith Percy and his team at the University of Lancaster for conducting the evaluation. As readers will note, the evaluation does not shrink from criticism. Such criticism as there is, however, is framed constructively and has been helpful to us in our management of the developing FEU REPLAN programme.

We commend the report to all involved in REPLAN, particularly those involved in project work, to whom it has been directed in a targeted dissemination.

DENNIS H DRYSDALE
Deputy Chief Officer
Further Education Unit

1 BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK OF THE EVALUATION

ORIGINS

This is the report of an evaluation study of FEU REPLAN projects which were commissioned between March 1984 and September 1986. The study was undertaken by Keith Percy of the University of Lancaster and carried out between December 1986 and March 1987.

REPLAN was the title eventually given to a Department of Education and Science (DES) initiative to 'improve educational opportunities for unemployed adults' in March 1984. It was announced initially as a three-year programme and has subsequently been renewed. It has three main strands:

- a nationwide team of field officers who are charged to stimulate, support, advise on and disseminate good practice, managed by the National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE);
- a programme of local development projects (commissioned and monitored by NIACE) designed to embody 'new' educational provision for unemployed adults, which is 'unequivocably local in scope, range and character';
- an 'innovative' programme of research and development projects for unemployed adults (commissioned and monitored by FEU), 'expected to produce lessons which are transferable, will result in a report for dissemination and will focus on curriculum development (interpreted widely)'.

Initially, in 1984/85, DES set aside £130,000 for the proposed FEU programme of curriculum development projects (and £100,000 for the NIACE programme of local development projects). Since then the funding has grown significantly. The provisional REPLAN budget for 1986/87 was quoted in July 1986 as being just under £1.3 million, of which 20% was to be allocated to FEU. In addition, the Training Agency (formerly the Manpower Services Commission) contributes, to FEU, 50% of the expenditure on REPLAN projects which it approves as relevant to its concerns. Monies are also made available to local authorities under the Education Support Grant arrangements to support REPLAN work.

In various DES press releases and statements in spring 1984, REPLAN was described as 'a development programme involving the evaluation of innovative forms of provision, the identification and dissemination of good practice, and the mobilisation of all relevant interests, including voluntary agencies, who are anxious to help'. It was explained that REPLAN was not based on a 'lot of preconceived ideas about the education services' role in relation to the unemployed ... we do not start this programme with a map of the complex territory showing a route which we want everybody else to follow. On the contrary, we want everyone else to help us draw the map'.

At the same time, the aims of 'a programme of development projects managed by the Further Education Unit' were stated to be both 'to promote research and development projects for the adult unemployed' and to 'organise a programme of curriculum development projects designed to explore innovative ideas'.

A number of points, relevant for any subsequent evaluation, can be culled from these generalised statements:

- While no prescriptive 'map of the complex territory' of educational work with unemployed adults was handed down as the framework for the REPLAN programme, it was urged that 'innovative ideas' and 'projects that are innovative' should be pinpointed.
- FEU projects were described as both 'research and development' and 'curriculum development'.
- The notion of 'projects' producing 'lessons which are transferable' was simply stated, but its meaning and implications in relation to the political, financial, institutional and human complexities of the worlds of post-compulsory education were not examined.
- The outcome of FEU projects was clearly indicated as 'a report for dissemination'.

It is important to note that, relatively quickly, FEU translated these generalised statements into the twin criteria of **innovation** and **transferability**, against which proposals to it for REPLAN projects would be assessed. They form the central elements in the document *Criteria for REPLAN Projects* developed by FEU and subsequently revised.

It is significant, too, that in 1983 FEU began to disseminate what is commonly called its curriculum development model. It emerged in discussions associated with the project conducted for FEU by the University of Surrey (see Chadwick and Legge, 1984). The 1986 revised version of the model is reproduced in Appendix 5. FEU argues that the model demonstrates its wish to 'interpret curriculum development very widely ... far more than the design of syllabuses and their teaching'. It is a rational model emphasising the interaction of needs analysis, design, implementation, evaluation and review, and support systems. It has been significant as part of the framework within which project proposals have been shaped and projects, once commissioned, have worked.

One of the early FEU REPLAN projects was funded in late 1984 to provide a tailor-made conceptual framework for REPLAN curriculum development. This project, conducted from Cambridge by Tony Watts with Eddie Knasel, produced a five-part analysis of objectives of educational work with unemployed adults which consists, briefly, of employability, coping, context awareness, leisure and opportunity creation and was among those included in the Lancaster evaluation brief. It has played a part in shaping the later commissioning pattern of FEU REPLAN projects and the substance of FEU-funded regional staff development work for REPLAN.

Some grasp of the way in which FEU works with regard to REPLAN is necessary to understand this report. The pivots of the REPLAN work are two development officers, each of whom, working closely with the deputy chief officer, liaises with enquirers and project proposers, helps to guide a proposal through to its final form and advises the deputy chief officer and the FEU projects committee on the merits of a proposal. If the proposal is approved and a project commissioned, the development officer monitors and works with the project director and project officers, as closely as is desirable and feasible, until the project is completed and the final report delivered, considered, revised and published or otherwise disseminated. These development officers have responsibilities and a workload other than REPLAN; other development officers are concerned with REPLAN projects because of the interrelationships between different aspects of FEU's work. Development officers are appointed 'from the field' on three-year contracts renewable for a maximum of a further two years.

THE LANCASTER EVALUATION

The Lancaster evaluation was itself funded as an FEU REPLAN project. At the beginning of an FEU project, the details of a project information bulletin are agreed between development officer and project director, and subsequently ratified by the project steering committee. The project information bulletin for the Lancaster project described its 'aims' as:

> *'to evaluate FEU REPLAN projects in the light of the explicit and developing aims of the project programme as a whole and of the aims of the REPLAN initiative'.*

The 'outcomes' (project information bulletins have a particular format) of the Lancaster project were further stated to be:

> *'evaluation of projects, review of range of projects, existing monitoring and evaluation, and recommendations about the FEU project programme as a whole'.*

The evaluation brief contained 21 FEU REPLAN projects (including the Watts/Knasel project which was excluded from fieldwork because of its special nature). The most important practical parameters of any evaluation are the **time** and **resources** made available for its work. The evaluation had four months for fieldwork and three weeks for production of the final report. This short time-span was determined by the dates of FEU's internal committee cycle and the wish for the report to contribute to the review of REPLAN which it was undertaking as the first three-year programme came to an end. Total resources available for the evaluation were £8,250 (raised to just over £9,000 in the last week of fieldwork).

The methodology of the evaluation is described in Appendix 2. Given the duration of the project, there was no opportunity for experimentation with methodology: it consisted of the standard techniques of document analysis, postal enquiry, visits to projects for observation of, and interviews with, key participants, and subsequent follow-up of missing data by post and telephone. Development officers were interviewed, FEU REPLAN files examined, and all interim and final reports from projects then available analysed.

The only relatively unusual element of the methodology of the evaluation was the inclusion of what was called an advisory consultation, which lasted one whole day and took place three weeks before the end of the fieldwork. Fifteen specially invited people attended (plus two FEU development officers and four Lancaster project workers), representing a broad swathe of senior and experienced colleagues from further, adult and higher education with knowledge of the context and/or practice of educational work with unemployed adults (names of those participating are given in Appendix 4). They were briefed in advance about FEU REPLAN work and the interim findings of the evaluation project; most of them were interviewed by telephone in the week before the advisory consultation for their views on certain aspects of the evaluation. Throughout the day, in a variety of small-group and plenary sessions, their conclusions were sought and recorded on the concepts, approaches and outcomes which were becoming apparent in FEU REPLAN projects.

The purpose of the advisory consultation was neither to achieve consensus nor to decide what the conclusions of the evaluation project should be, but to explore the thinking of a widely representative and experienced group of practitioners and policy-makers and chart the range of responses that would be forthcoming to a number of key issues. The report to FEU (the product of a single writer) would take account of the range of response and use it for illustrative purposes, but not necessarily mirror, replicate or accept any part of it.

Evaluation is not an exact science; indeed, it is scarcely a science at all. By definition it implies judgement, the assessment of human activity, the giving of 'value'. It is important in evaluating educational practice to look for objective measures but, as this report shows, most objective measures in the field of educational work with unemployed adults embody quantification of subjective judgements.

Before the start of fieldwork, the Lancaster evaluation project deliberately stipulated the limits within which it would work, indicated what it would evaluate, and estimated the balance between objectivity and subjectivity and between fact and interpretation with which it would be obliged to be content. The short time available for fieldwork was a crucial consideration. The evaluation, it was stipulated, would use an overall framework consisting of:

AIMS	*The extent to which the range and contents of the FEU REPLAN projects fulfil the aims of the FEU programme as well as the extent to which projects have achieved certain of their stated objectives.*
EFFICIENCY	*The extent to which various aspects of project operation (e.g. selection of staff, day-to-day management, surveys, report writing, etc.) have been conducted efficiently.*
EFFICACY	*The extent to which projects have affected their local institutions and local situations as well as the extent to which outcomes of projects have been 'transferred' regionally and nationally.*
VALUE FOR MONEY	*The comparison of 'gains' identified under aims, efficiency and efficacy with their cost in money resources, i.e. in this case the grant made to each project (although it would be possible, hypothetically at least, to include non-money costs, e.g. the amount of FEU development officer time consumed by each project).*

Furthermore, the evaluation of aims was conceptualised as having a three-fold nature:

- the aims of the FEU REPLAN programme as contained in the criteria and other literature;
- the aims and objectives of projects as stated in proposal documents and project information bulletins;
- the aims of project participants, i.e.:
  - unemployed user aims,
  - project worker aims,
  - project director/sponsor aims.

With regard to the efficiency of projects, the following framework was used to arrive at an overall evaluation of project performance:

- IDEAS – the nature of the ideas which lay behind a project proposal;
- OPERATIONALISATION – the way in which ideas were operationalised into:
  - OBJECTIVES – which a project was seeking to achieve;
  - METHODOLOGY – through which a project sought to achieve its objectives;
- ACTIVITY – what the project did;
- MONITORING – the means through which the project kept under review its progress towards objectives, the workings of its methodology and its activity;
- REPORTING – the reporting of project activity and outcomes;
- DISSEMINATION – the dissemination and transferring of project activity and outcomes to others locally, regionally and nationally.

Only limited attention could be given to efficacy. The evaluation was funded for fieldwork to be completed by the end of March 1987 and most FEU REPLAN projects in the evaluation brief had either not finished their work by then or had only recently submitted their draft final reports. It was not possible to evaluate properly the 'effects' of these projects either in the local situation or in national dissemination. However, some attempt is made in Chapter 5.

The framework of evaluation detailed above provides the structure for what follows in this report. After Chapter 2, which attempts to give the flavour of the fieldwork with the 21 projects in the evaluation brief, there are three chapters which contain data and conclusions on the evaluation of aims, efficiency and efficacy. Comments on value for money are contained in the final chapter which also includes summary conclusions and recommendations.

The Lancaster evaluation project was fortunate to be supported throughout by the FEU development officer monitoring it – Martin Johnson – other FEU development officers and the Adult Unemployment Sub-Group of FEU's Advisory Committee on the Education and Training of Adults. The members of the latter (suitably augmented) formed the steering committee of the Lancaster project and are listed in Appendix 3.

2 FEU REPLAN: THE FIRST 21 PROJECTS

This chapter gives an analytic and descriptive overview of the 21 FEU REPLAN projects in the evaluation brief. In the first section, a series of characteristics of projects are reviewed in tabular form. The 21 projects are then described briefly with a number of critical and evaluative observations attached, which are derived from the fieldwork. In the last section, a few general and more speculative analyses are made of project characteristics.

OVERVIEW OF PROJECTS

A list of FEU REPLAN projects included in the evaluation brief is given in Appendix 1.

A simple analysis of the geographical location of the 21 projects (location is taken to be where the bulk of the project work was carried out, which is normally also where the institutional grantee was located) is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: ***Location of 21 projects***

London and South East	8
West Midlands	4
South West	4
East Midlands	3
North East	2
North West	0
Wales	0

Table 1 shows that these early FEU REPLAN projects were not necessarily located in the areas of the country where the adult unemployment rate was highest – although such an observation can be misleading because of the localised pockets of high unemployment that occur everywhere. Comparison should be made, however, with Table 12 in Chapter 6, which shows the same analysis for all projects up to December 1987 and appears to suggest that geographical distribution was taken into account in subsequent FEU decisions.

Table 2 shows the spread of institutions receiving grants for the original 21 projects.

TABLE 2: ***Institutional grantees***

Further education/technical colleges	7
Polytechnics	2
County councils	2
Adult education institutes	2
Voluntary organisations	2
WEA district	1
University	1
Guidance service	1
Others	3

Tables 3 and 4 show the funding and intended durations of the 21 projects. These can only be approximations as there are adjustments to funding and duration during the life of a project.

TABLE 3: ***Funding of projects***

£ (k)	No.	£ (k)	No.
1 – 5	2	26 – 30	4
6 – 10	3	31 – 35	0
11 – 15	4	36 – 40	0
16 – 20	4	41 – 45	1
21 – 25	3		
TOTAL FUNDING = £374,000 (approx.)			

TABLE 4: ***Intended duration of projects***

MONTHS	No.
1 – 6	2
7 – 12	6
13 – 18	4
19 – 24	9
NUMBER OF PROJECT MONTHS = 355	

Table 3 and Appendix 1 show that FEU REPLAN projects are normally funded below £30,000, often below £20,000. Table 4 and Appendix 1 show that the funding is normally for a period of no more than two years and usually over nine months.

Taking Tables 3 and 4 together, we can see that approximately 355 project months were funded under FEU REPLAN at a cost of £374,000. That works out at a rough cost of £1,054 per project month. This ratio accords well with the funding rule of thumb of £1,000 per project month, which development officers told us was applied to project proposals.

Table 5 looks at the 21 projects in terms of their relationship with identifiable sub-groups within the unemployed population. It shows that a notion of 'target groups' of unemployed people was not a criterion for selection of these projects; indeed only seven projects can be identified with such target groups and none at all with significant ones such as female unemployed and young unemployed.

TABLE 5: ***Unemployed target groups***

TARGET GROUP	PROJECT FREQUENCY
Long-term unemployed	2
Ethnic minorities	2
Special needs	1
Older adults	1
Graduates	1

In Table 6, an attempt is made to allocate the 21 projects to the most appropriate part of the FEU curriculum development model (see Appendix 5). The allocation has been according to the aims of the projects as identified from the project information bulletins; (with some difficulty) projects have been allocated to one sector of the model only. Table 6 appears to show a reasonable distribution of projects throughout the curriculum development model.

TABLE 6: *Projects allocated to FEU Curriculum Development model*

Needs analysis	5
Design	4
Implementation	3
Evaluation and review	3
Support systems	6

It was relevant also to consider the location of the projects (again, according to their aims as recorded in the project information bulletins) in the Watts/Knasel framework of curriculum objectives for work with unemployed people. Since the Watts/Knasel framework was published after most of these projects had already been commissioned, its application has only a certain analytical significance. Projects were allocated to as many of the objectives as seemed appropriate. It can be seen that most projects are not concerned with educational opportunities for unemployed people that consider either the **context** of unemployment or self-employment and alternative life style **opportunity creation.**

TABLE 7: *Projects located in Watts/Knasel curriculum framework*
(numbers are FEU project (RP) numbers)

EMPLOYABILITY							
203	242	253	266	295	303	322	357
232	252	254	267	296	321	337	358
COPING							
209	242	253	266	267	332	357	383
CONTEXT							
232							
LEISURE							
203	242	266	267	273	337	357	
OPPORTUNITY CREATION							
203	322						

OUTLINES OF 21 PROJECTS

The project descriptions contained in this section (pages 9-16) were derived from the fieldwork and (with the exception of one or two updating insertions) written in April 1987. They contain critical and evaluative remarks and are so brief that they are open to charges of not doing projects 'justice'. It may be so in some cases. Nevertheless, is appeared useful to attempt this exercise as a backcloth to the chapters which follow, and because nowhere else in the report are comments made which can be identified with particular projects.

FEU comment:
The author's comments that these brief descriptions may not do justice to the projects may not serve to reduce the impact of any criticism on those reponsible for the projects. It has nevertheless been decided to publish this section of the report for reasons of integrity. The FEU does not necessarily agree with the descriptions, noting that they are the result of evaluators' relatively brief contacts with the projects, but believes they are of value as a conscientious and systematic response to the project review.

RP203 □ Adult Unemployed: Community Sports Leaders Award

- *Southwark Institute of Adult Education*
- *February – April 1984*
- *£1,674*

This FEU project was already on the books and was transferred to REPLAN when the latter was announced. Essentially a pilot course for the Community Sports Leaders Award, it was shaped by the addition of modules to a national scheme and advertised at a low fee to run on six Friday evenings and two full Saturdays. The award was described as 'a practical course designed to develop the qualities of leadership and responsibility through one form or another of sport and recreation'. The pilot course was completed by 32 people (out of 36), about one third of whom were unemployed. The 32 received the Award.

The course was evaluated systematically by a worker from the Policy Studies Institute. A report containing varied suggestions for development and improvement was the outcome.

The course has continued, in modified form, at Southwark Institute and has subsequently attracted higher proportions of unemployed people. Other courses, allowing progression to other awards, have been developed. Higher level national awards for adults have been piloted by the Central Council of Physical Recreation. We were told that Southwark's initiative has been replicated by other adult education institutions.

The project resulted (in March 1986, 23 months after completion) in a short but useful FEU REPLAN publication *The CCPR Community Sports Leaders Award*. We understand that a development officer played a significant part in editing/writing this publication.

RP209: □ Dissemination of Information on Education and Training for Disabled Adults in Southwark

- *Information Network on Southwark Education and Training (INSET)*
- *February – March 1984*
- *£2,500*

FEU had already commissioned this project when REPLAN was announced. Its aim was to explore means of disseminating information on educational and training opportunities to people with disabilities living in Southwark.

The project carried out a questionnaire survey of local people with disabilities and interviewed local professionals who worked with them. A ten-page report and three-page summary of recommendations were produced. The report reflects the varying needs of different categories of people with disabilities and indicates an 'overwhelming pattern of experience ... that disabled people feel that they are being badly served by the professionals,' including educators.

Recommendations are made relating to access to educational opportunities and to inter-professional networks (including the school careers service) to provide people with disabilities with relevant guidance to education and training. The report makes suggestions about outreach work and its obvious importance and requirements for adequate resourcing.

RP232 □ Curricular Strategies for Disadvantaged Adults (original title)

- *Project Fullemploy*
- *August 1984 – October 1985 (completed in December 1985)*
- *£14,175*

Project Fullemploy is a voluntary organisation and reports itself to be 'a multi-ethnic and business-based initiative which focuses the expertise and resources of the private and public sector on issues of unemployment'.

Our impression is that the project to be funded by FEU was gradually conceptualised and broadened after lengthy interaction between the organisation and the relevant FEU development officer. Project Fullemploy added £8,000 to FEU's grant.

An unusually detailed and most interesting project information bulletin shows the aims of the project to be development of 'curricular strategies' in further and community education, vocational work preparation to promote access to FHE of disadvantaged (especially Afro-Caribbean) young adults, and development of 'staff awareness of the needs and aspirations of this group of students'. It details the range of work envisaged – reviewing existing teaching and learning materials; developing new materials for students and for staff support; testing, piloting, evaluation and dissemination of materials; participation in each others' classes by further education and Project Fullemploy staff; and production of videos and other activities. Students would play 'an active role' in the development and production of materials. The content of materials would relate particularly to:

- development of identity for black people;
- self-presentation;
- self-expression in written English for black people, using materials which recognised the special skills 'of those with two language codes.'

FEU did not publish the final report but, after well over a year, produced a summary bulletin, *Working with Young Adults in a Multicultural Context*. A substantial *Manual for Practitioners* was also produced by the project, together with a range of teaching/learning materials.

Significantly, there was early dissatisfaction with the project title because it did not refer specifically to ethnic minority students. Project workers suggested the title – 'Anti-Racist Curricular Strategies for a Multi-Ethnic Society'. FEU agreed to 'Working with Adults: Curricular Strategies for a Multicultural Society'.

The final report records project aims which were quite unlike those in the project information bulletin and do not appear to have been discussed by the steering committee. They refer to:

- the 'interaction between institutional structures and curricular strategies';
- 'devolving power to the learner ... in a white-dominated society';
- 'combating the racist bias still inherent in most curricula'.

It seems evident that the aims recorded in the project information bulletin were not wholly achieved. The final report made extensive reference to 'communication problems with FE colleges'.

RP242 □ An Interactive Guidance Package for Adult Unemployed

- *Council for Educational Technology (CET) (now the National Council for Educational Technology (NCET))*
- *September 1984 – March 1986 (extended to December 1986)*
- *£43,700*

This was the most expensive (in terms of FEU grant) of the projects in the evaluation brief. Three other agencies also had a financial commitment. The CET was involved in the application and development of the new technology. Kent County Council paid for three part-time fieldworkers. The then Manpower Services Commission provided the site for the guidance activity in the Gillingham Jobcentre. A full-time project officer was employed through the FEU grant.

CET set up the Learning Links project in 1983 to facilitate student-negotiated learning, support informal adult learning and test the usefulness of microcomputer technology in adult educational guidance. The Learning Links project was designed to operate in six centres nationally; only four were developed, including Gillingham. FEU's involvement was in Gillingham and aimed at the development of an interactive educational and training guidance package for adult unemployed together with networks for informal adult learning.

The project workers' time was, therefore, spread across a range of different activities – each of more interest to one sponsor than the others. In the first year at Gillingham there was some development of informal learning groups among adults not normally involved in formal education, and some development of networks (with 'mini training conferences') of statutory and voluntary agencies which worked with adult unemployed. A planned skills exchange did not materialise successfully. There were teething troubles with the computer; none of the four workers in Kent had computer experience and were trained by the project director who worked from CET in London. They collected information on local education and training opportunities with difficulty, and subsequently had problems in updating.

The interactive guidance program developed was not completely satisfactory. It was lengthy to use and contained only some of the information originally planned. There was only limited space available for it in the Jobcentre. Its use by unemployed people was not heavy although it was meant, often, to be the basis of a client/counsellor interview.

Our impression is that none of the project sponsors got what they were hoping for from the project. Potentially it was an important collaboration and well worth trying. The informal education aspect in which CET were particularly interested and the interactive guidance package which FEU wanted to foster were exciting ideas that still merit examination. However, project activity, the pragmatic realities of the context and the complexities of the collaboration did not fully measure up to the ideas. Kent County Council appears to have hoped for a closer integration with its adult education service (which was, however, undergoing reorganisation at the time) and for a more fully functioning educational guidance service. Nevertheless, an informant from Kent County Council told us that Kent is proceeding to put together an educational guidance network and was impressed by network training conferences organised by the project. The Training Agency is continuing to support the Gillingham guidance service under the Training Access Points Scheme (TAPS) and is steering it towards training in guidance.

RP252 □ Adult Unemployed: Needs Analysis, Counselling and Development in MSC-Related Provision

- *Grimsby College of Technology*
- *September 1984 – June 1985*
- *£7,652*

The aim of the project was to review and revise the curricula of the, as it was then, Manpower Services Commission related provision for adult unemployed at Grimsby College. It was one of the quickest FEU REPLAN projects to get under way – the proposal was put forward in June 1984, approved in August, and under way in September. It kept to budget and the agreed duration.

The project had one part-time project officer, but several other college staff were associated. It reviewed the development of two existing courses: a preparatory course and a vocational assessment programme. Two hundred questionnaires were completed by past and present students; 17 of these were interviewed by telephone. Small-scale surveys were conducted of college heads of department, teaching staff, and other agencies. The extent of this fieldwork was less than had been projected.

The final report (published in late 1987 as *Preparing Adults*) claims that 90% of the student sample had 'achieved outcomes acceptable both to providers and sponsors' (which appears to signify that students had found work, moved on to further education or training, or were awaiting a response to an application for further education or training). The report contains a variety of recommendations for good practice relating to staffing, accommodation, counselling, staff development and other areas. To a certain extent, the project (and the courses examined) was subsequently overtaken in Grimsby College by changes in MSC policy. The College itself has been reorganised and an Educational Access Unit created. There are interesting and useful passages in the report on the changing context of MSC policy on adult training and ways of adapting to that context.

RP253 □ Guidance Centre for the Unemployed – ICTAC (Inner City Training Advice Centre)

- *Handsworth Technical College, Birmingham*
- *September 1985 – August 1987*
- *£30,105*

The aims of this venture were to establish a guidance centre in the inner city for unemployed adults (especially from ethnic minority groups), stimulate training and education providers, respond to new needs expressed by ICTAC's clients, and assist providers with recruitment, curriculum development and evaluation. The FEU grant was supplemented by £35,000 from the West Midlands County Council Economic Development Unit. Staffing was substantial and from a mixture of ethnic backgrounds – three project officers (with three part-time project workers added under the Community Programme).

After some months, ICTAC was established in a drop-in guidance centre (shop premises) in Handsworth. It had already begun a series of 'outreach clinics' at various locations throughout the city, including libraries, Jobcentres, community organisations and mosques. 'Clinics' were tables and displays manned by a guidance worker. At the Handsworth advice shop, BOLDU (Birmingham Open Learning Development Unit) established a 'Local Learning Centre' with computer equipment and computer learning packages. From its information files, ICTAC quickly began to put together information leaflets in various languages; its publicity material was available in six languages.

ICTAC staff appear to have been involved in a number of city adult

learning initiatives because of their special knowledge, including Restart, 'Women in Technology' and a city-wide 'Summer Return to Learn Programme'. Some courses (e.g. Asian Music, Afro-Caribbean Hairdressing) were started at ICTAC's suggestion. Certain well-written ICTAC position papers were made available to providers; emphasis was drawn to the number of official (DHSS, MSC, etc.) advisory documents for unemployed people which existed only in English. ICTAC highlighted its existence in the city by organising, in the Council House, a one-day conference on the needs of unemployed ethnic minority adults in April 1986. It was attended by over 100 people from all relevant professional agencies and resulted in the establishment of a city working party.

Certainly a busy and many-sided project, but it is a little difficult to assess its effectiveness. Various figures on usage by clients are quoted (e.g., between March and November 1986, 1,800 clients were in the shop, 450 of whom required 'in-depth counselling'). However, during the fieldwork there seemed to be no systematic monitoring of usage; we were quoted no client 'follow-up' figures.

The ICTAC team produced a development plan for 1987 – 88 which included outreach guidance via a minibus. However, the local authority did not accept the plan and the drop-in guidance centre closed in summer 1987 as FEU funds ceased.

An informant within the city education department told us that he certainly regarded ICTAC as significant in raising the educational profile of unemployed adults from ethnic minorities and emphasising the possibilities of networking and collaboration. To some extent these ideas had been taken over by the adult and further education services, and would inform their approach in the future.

RP254 □ Evaluation of an Alternative Programme for the Long-term Unemployed

- *Hinckley College of Further Education*
- *January 1985 – January 1987*
- *£11,627*

Hinckley College has been running an alternative programme for unemployed adults since 1981. The aim of the FEU project was to carry out an evaluation of the alternative programme (enrolment in late 1986 was about 200), make provision more responsive to the needs of unemployed people, and offer guidance on course design and development to other agencies involved in similar provision.

The project was undertaken part time by the senior lecturer responsible for the programme, assisted by a part-time counsellor. After a period, a lecturer from Nottingham University was involved to design and supervise evaluation research methods; this aspect of the project became methodologically very sophisticated. It appears that the FEU grant was basically used for this evaluation and for a more substantial number of counselling hours.

The evaluation included a survey of changing perceptions of students during the programme. Some 133 unemployed students completed a questionnaire and a sub-sample of 25 were interviewed at the beginning and end of the year. Evaluation outcomes seem somewhat mixed. Aspects of the programme (so-called 'group-contact time' and the summer programme) were not highly rated. The evaluation raised important questions about the bounds which should be set on the availability of counselling in this setting and the tension that appeared to exist between the desire for the programme to maintain a separate identity and the integration of the programme into the mainstream of college life. It was significant that staff interviewed had varying experience and views (including anxieties) about the programme and the new clientele that came with it.

In general, surveys showed positive findings about the outcomes of the programme. Some 27% of students over three years found work; 41% had not attended further education institutions before; 42% had left school without formal qualifications. 'Messages' from the project were that 'it will stop people making the same mistakes' and 'saying that client control is the thing ... they do not always know what they want.'

RP266 □ Kings Heath Adult Education and Training Development

- *Kings Heath Institute, Birmingham*
- *November 1984 – October 1986*
- *£27,500*

The project, in company with the other Birmingham project, RP253, was originally conceived of as (to quote the project information bulletin) providing 'a blueprint for the development of Birmingham's adult training advice and adult education services. The models devised can be used for closer collaborative approaches to adult education and training between the FE and adult education sectors generally.' It was not to be. Both projects (but RP266 in particular) were soon overtaken by a major reorganisation of Birmingham's education and leisure services departments.

The aim of the project was to initiate a developmental process for the adult education and training curriculum of the King's Heath area. In particular, needs of unemployed and disadvantaged people would be investigated, gaps in provision identified, new provision made, opportunities for collaboration and liaison exploited, and the whole developmental process monitored and evaluated. FEU money would provide the opportunities and resource to review, and to act in response to that review.

Certainly, some of this happened; the full-time project officer worked energetically and on many different projects during the two years. The project reacted intelligently both to opportunities and set-backs and had some identifiable successes. A variety of forms of enquiry into 'needs' of unemployed people were used, including 100 street poll interviews, 24 'in-depth' interviews, 185 'door knocks' among the Asian community, and analysis of autumn 1985 enrolment statistics. The final report charts 27 'pilot projects' which were undertaken as a consequence of the enquiries – ranging from small one-off courses to more substantial developments such as an inter-professional training and development group and an open week at one of the centres.

The project director called the project a 'stabilising feature' in adult education locally at a time of considerable change. It raised the profile of education and training for unemployed people, we were told, and created new links between providers and potential providers. An informant in the city's education department, while observing that, in his view, the project had been overtaken by the city departmental reorganisation and MSC initiatives, nevertheless believed that it had emphasised and reminded them of a variety of aspects of good practice, e.g. the need for data and the ways in which it can be collated; 'the concept

of informality ... and the idea that provision could come from different simultaneous sources'; the need for a checklist of provision; the timing of courses, especially towards later starting times in the mornings; and the use of volunteers.

The draft final report contained 55 pages of text and a voluminous 102 pages of appendices. Although no single aspect of it is special or innovative, the whole gives the impression of movement, responsiveness and thoughtful development in the edited form in which it was published by FEU at the end of 1987 under the title *Listening to You ... Listening to Us*. Among the recommendations on resources is:

'that when external funding is taken up it is done in a way that fits an overall budgetary plan and with due consideration of the implications beyond the funding period.'

It is not clear that this was the case in King's Heath or that much substantial progress was made towards the third objective on the project information bulletin which refers to 'further development ... in other parts of the city.'

RP267 □ Improving Guidance and Provision for Unemployed Adults in a Major City

- ***Basford Hall College of Further Education, Nottingham***
- ***January 1985 – December 1986***
- ***£18,466***

Two full-time project officers were involved in this project, the aim of which was to promote the development of effective guidance and provision for unemployed adults in Nottingham.

In the first year of the project, competent surveys of unemployed adults (to identify educational and training needs and interests), employers (training needs), and voluntary and statutory agencies (education and training provision) were undertaken. In an interim report, recommendations were made for the provision of a city-wide guidance service. The local authority was not, at the time, able to support the provision recommended and the second half of the project did not proceed as originally intended. For a few months it trod water.

However, subsequently, a number of pilot initiatives were undertaken including the establishment of an informal agencies forum (some 35 agencies), collaborative outreach work with various city colleges (e.g. guidance sessions in a shopping arcade), and staff development exercises at local colleges. The project spent some time putting together an information pack on local education and training opportunities (and in securing financial sponsorships) – only to abandon it when it was discovered that a local library was carrying out an identical exercise.

The final report of the project, published by FEU as *Anxious to Work*, is honest and interesting. We think it would be thought provoking and useful to a college embarking on the development of guidance and provision for unemployed adults.

RP273 □ Analysis of Assessment and Structure within 'Return to Learn' Courses

- ***WEA (Berks, Bucks and Oxon) and Oxford University Department of External Studies***
- ***January 1985 – December 1986***
- ***£25,000***

A three-year project proposed to FEU, it was funded for two and intended to continue for a third year with finance from the two initiating institutions. The title of the project does not clearly convey project aims, which were to monitor and evaluate two 'Second Chance to Learn' courses (run in Milton Keynes and Oxford by the WEA), measure and chart student progress within and after the course, and document the process of course review and modification made possible by the presence of built-in, systematic, evaluation processes.

Year 1 of the project consisted of a pilot study of one 'Second Chance to Learn' course, the instigation of different research and monitoring techniques, and the writing of an interim report. In year 2, the full-time project officer undertook a detailed study of three 'Second Chance to Learn' courses (which included a residential element) and investigated the course records, questionnaire surveys of students, interviews of students and staff at different points of time, and participant observations. Two research workshops were held for course lecturers.

There were 17 students on the pilot course, 14 of them women. Three students were 'registered unemployed at the start of the course; several others were actively seeking work'. Our impression is that the project was managed well and the monitoring and evaluation carried out efficiently and systematically. The interim report was well written although somewhat self-consciously detailed about methodology. However, we gather that part-time tutors on the courses were resistant to monitoring and generally regarded it as of marginal value. It was not clear to us to what extent the extensive evaluation exercise caused modifications which were significant in the running of the courses or in any aspect of WEA practice connected with them. It did not seem that any significant breakthrough has been achieved on measuring or 'assessing' student progress in these courses.

There does seem to have been some tension over the notion of the project as 'research' (participants regularly talked or wrote to us about it as 'research'; the steering committee was called the 'joint research committee') and the 'practical outcomes which FEU expects'. Consequently,there also had to be considerable discussion about the nature of the final report which FEU would find acceptable. Towards the end of this project the project worker was said to be 'revisiting the data' accumulated, much of which was not used in the final report to FEU. They were particularly interested in 'the starting-points and destinations' of students, we are told, and in developing a 'theoretical understanding of SCTL'.

RP285 □ Unemployment and the FE Curriculum

- ***National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling***
- ***January – August 1985***
- ***£8,500***

This is the best known of FEU's REPLAN projects to date. It resulted in the publication *Adult Unemployment and the Curriculum: A Manual for Practitioners* Watts, A.G. and Knasel, E. (FEU, 1985), which had an initial print run of 22,500 copies and has had two reprints of 5,000 copies each.

The publication has been the subject of a substantial nationwide dissemination exercise by FEU (about £30,000 allocated to this purpose.) The dissemination activities and the reaction of the field to the Watts/ Knasel publication have been examined and reported on in the recent FEU project RP285b. A current FEU project in the East Midlands

(RP416) is testing the Watts/Knasel curriculum planning checklist in a range of institutional settings; the Watts/Knasel conceptual framework has been assimilated to the revised FEU criteria for REPLAN projects. There has also been some international dissemination of the framework.
RP285 was clearly central to FEU's thinking about REPLAN from its inception – for example its steering committee, with one or two additions, was the adult education sub-group of FEU's own advisory committee on the education and training of adults. FEU rightly saw the large amount of rapid activity and hurried provision which had developed in the education and training of adults in the 1980s as often marked by confusion and duplication and without the discipline of a curriculum conceptual framework and good practice in curriculum development. It rightly saw a gap for a practical framework within which practitioners could locate themselves.

Of course, Watts had created his conceptual framework in another context and for other purposes (see Watts, 1983). The second major section of the RP285 publication, on managing and implementing curriculum development, is in fact not empirically derived but an extension and elaboration of the FEU curriculum development model (see Appendix 5). Some observers have questioned the centrality and importance of the project's five case studies to the published outcomes. The case studies took up some months of project time; nevertheless, the efficiency, clear sense of direction, cost effectiveness and valuable outcomes of RP285 cannot easily be questioned.

RP295 □ Training for the Unemployed in Caravan, Camping and Self-Catering Parks

- *Evesham College of Further Education*
- *June 1985 – June 1986*
- *£16,340*

In some ways, the concept and design were those of a classic FEU REPLAN project. It grew out of a Local Collaborative Project between Evesham College and a consortium of caravan parks, which suggested that there were considerable employment possibilities for unemployed people in such parks and that no relevant basic training was available. The aims of the REPLAN project were to investigate training needs and design and pilot a modular curriculum for unemployed people interested in finding employment in the caravan and camping parks.

One (initially) full-time project officer was appointed. He made trips to all the regions of the country and visited proprietors of parks. The response to this survey was, perhaps, less complete than it might have been. However, on the basis of this investigation, on a limited survey of park employees and participant observation by the project officer on a site, proposals for the development of a pilot training course were drawn up with the assistance of the skills development unit of the college. Six unemployed people attended and completed the course – running under 21 hours rule – which evolved as they were being taught. It extended to cover on-site work experience and included a core unit in communication skills and (actual or potential) options in areas such as maintenance, health and safety, reception, etc. An internal form of certification was established. Five of the six students (the final report refers to 83%) succeeded in getting jobs after the course; it does seem that employment prospects are considerable in this segment of the holiday market.

We understand that, in what was essentially a practical course, there were problems over the provision of adequate resources. The writing of the final report caused considerable difficulties. The college intends to run the course again although, at the time of writing, we had not received confirmation of future plans. Certainly, the pilot course design looked highly relevant to vocational opportunities and transferable to other colleges.

A report of the project, *Training for the Self-Catering Industry*, has been published by FEU.

RP296 □ Investigation of Education and Training Needs and Opportunities for Unwaged Adults in their Forties and Fifties

- *Continuing Education Unit, Thames Polytechnic*
- *June 1985 – June 1987*
- *£14,808*

An excellent and detailed proposal, describing 'an action research programme to assess the extent to which unemployed older men and women may be encouraged to participate more productively in the local community' led to the funding of this project, the only one in the FEU REPLAN programme targeted at older unemployed men and women. The proposal was originally entitled 'Making Experience Count', which indicated the centrality which proposers wished to give in their project to the assessment of prior learning, formal and non-formal, by older people. The project information bulletin noted that a project worker 'will use outreach methods' to:

- 'catalogue needs and perceptions of this group';
- 'map available and local provision';
- 'pilot innovatory provision on a small scale'.

The project worker was part time but, in our view (admittedly a retrospective one), should have been full time. This project depended crucially upon the success of the 'outreach methods' in making meaningful contact with older (working-class) unemployed adults. Greater availability of time might have made possible a greater range of more experimental and sensitive communication with the target group.

The methods of outreach used included questionnaires left at various points (e.g. job and community centres) which achieved, reportedly, a response rate of 10 – 15%; and a small interview study of working-class people (n = 11) which was written up empathetically. The project made contact with an unemployed elderly docker who, for some time, had been trying to establish training for unemployed people as local tourist guides. The project worker supported this initiative and helped it through various bureaucratic tangles so that the course ran in summer 1986 (16 participants) and winter 1986/87 (course length doubled to two terms). An examining board was established and a form of certificate given. The future of the course was not clear to us. There was also limited use of 'Making Experience Count' groups, with only partial success. Steering (or rather, support) committee minutes of this project are detailed and informative and suggest that the project was continually trying to understand and reassess the rationale and outcomes of its activity. Compared with the original project proposal, the outcomes of this project seem relatively limited.

RP303 □ Creating a Curriculum for the Long-Term and Itinerant Unemployed in East Dorset

- *Dorset LEA*
- *May 1985 – December 1986*
- *£21,123*

This project (originally proposed for three years but approved for two) had a couple of unusual features in its design. Probably inspired by successful experience with adult literacy, it proposed to explore the use of volunteers in work with unemployed people. It also identified a group of unemployed people which it called 'itinerant' unemployed. Our impression is that the definition of 'itinerant' was uncertain and shifted as a result of the early experience of the project. 'Itinerant unemployed' became synonymous with 'seasonal workers', but the project's enquiries suggested that seasonal workers were normally schoolchildren, students, local residents who only wanted summer work, or immigrants whose life style did not leave space for training. In effect, the project concentrated on long-term unemployed.

The project brief was developmental – to identify curriculum needs for its target group of unemployed, to 'prepare and test a new curriculum model, to evaluate it and to report on the above, including the transferability of the project outcomes to other holiday areas'. The project information bulletin refers to the recruitment and training of 'thirty volunteers, twenty to assist with outreach and ten with counselling.' There were three paid part-time project workers – two 'outreach team leaders' and one 'counselling team leader.'

In fact, during the project, only 17 volunteers were recruited. These were given an elaborate form of training over a period of weeks; nine eventually helped the three project workers in interviewing 136 unemployed adults. From this experience, the project concluded that the recruitment and training of volunteers (for such tasks as interviewing) were not an effective use of time in short-term projects. (However, it is possible to conclude, to the contrary, that the idea was not wrong, but rather the way in which the project implemented it.)

The project report is well written and contains clear accounts of methodology, educational provision available to unemployed people in south-east Dorset, and outcomes of the survey of unemployed adults. The survey appeared to show that courses specifically mounted for unemployed people, particularly in personal and practical skills, would recruit well. The project therefore designed a pilot course which was a sensitive and well thought-out attempt to allow participants to progress with three aims in mind – to assess their experience and potential, to develop practical and personal skills, and to examine options open to them. The pilot course was planned to run for six weeks, up to a maximum of 21 hours per week. There was significant staff development support. The course was publicised as 'Take 6'. There were 31 applicants; 18 were selected. It had been intended to run the course for unemployed people with nothing more than basic educational qualifications; however, most applicants were better qualified.

Evaluation of the pilot course was systematic and generally very positive. The report recounts that, by the final day, 14 out of the 16 students remaining on the course had 'made decisions about their immediate future'. It also records that elsewhere in the county very similar courses to 'Take 6' were being started or planned, but with the financial support of the MSC, not the County Council.

A bulletin summarising the work of the project, *Unemployment, Education and Training on the South Coast*, was published by FEU.

RP321 □ Skills Assessment and Vocational Guidance for Unemployed People

- *Avon County Council*
- *January 1986 – December 1987*
- *£30,819*

The project proposed to take the notion and the practices of assessment of prior experiential learning and to apply them to the situation of long-term unemployed people wishing to take stock of themselves and their skills of all kinds and to consider potential transitions to new forms of employment. Thus, the process of portfolio construction was to be allied to more traditional forms of vocational guidance, with possible provision of new training opportunities.

The project was proposed by the head of the large Avon Staff Development Unit (who subsequently moved jobs to NCVQ). The Staff Development Unit (SDU) would hold the project purse-strings, provide co-ordination, staff development support, learning and advisory materials and general monitoring; particular colleges (the initial number was three) would be allocated sums through which to develop experimental provision within the project brief. A full-time project officer working from SDU (but with only half the time paid for by FEU) would co-ordinate the project. In fact, the first project officer appointed left the project after a few weeks.

The operation of the project was quite complex, with much depending on initiatives within the colleges and the nature of the relationships between SDU and the participating colleges. The project began very slowly. It appears to have been proposed in early 1985, effectively approved in early summer 1985, but under way only in January 1986. It made a bad start. Two colleges and one adult education centre contracted to draw up their own proposals for portfolio workshops, student assessment, provision of relevant facilities and recruitment of unemployed people in early 1986. By summer 1986, it was clear that two of these institutions had made only partial progress. Reassessment of the project and the development of tighter guidelines by SDU followed. Two new institutions were added to the project by Autumn 1986 – another college (already making extensive provision for unemployed people) and a drop-in probation centre.

The project then proceeded relatively strongly. Staff development opportunities and the creation of a central resource bank by the project provided relevant central support for a range of actual and planned provision by the five institutions. Work began on access and progression by unemployed people to further 'education and training opportunities and employment', by reviewing and investigating local opportunities. The project appeared to be directed efficiently, although during the fieldwork there was no formal project director.

We are not clear how many long-term unemployed were involved in portfolio construction as a result of the project. Figures of 30 to 50 were quoted to us.

RP322 □ PHASE 1 – An Analysis of Training Needs Within the Leisure Industries PHASE 2 – Flexible Training Packages for Operatives in Leisure Related Industries

- *North Warwickshire College, Nuneaton*
- *September 1985 – January 1986 (Phase 1)*
  September 1986 – August 1987 (Phase 2)
- *£5,000 (Phase 1)*
  £17,884 (Phase 2)

Phase 1 of this project set out to identify the skills and knowledge needed by operatives in sport, leisure and recreation industries (e.g. in health centres, public swimming baths and leisure centres) and to propose the kind of 'flexible training packages' which would enable unemployed people to gain those skills. A questionnaire survey of employers about job and training opportunities (55 returns from 124 distributed), a further questionnaire and interview of 25 selected employers about qualities and skills required in operatives, an interview of operatives in the selected centres, and an enquiry to 21 local authority recreation and amenity departments about future training prospects contributed to recommendations for the curriculum content and teaching and learning strategies deduced to be appropriate for operatives in the targeted centres and amenities. The report on Phase 1 contains detailed recommendations for a modular course which includes structured induction, 'job rehearsal' and certification based on summative profile, continuous assessment and a 'job rehearsal pro forma'. FEU produced a two-page summary bulletin of the report.

The proposal for Phase 2 appears to have been made to FEU in December 1985, but not approved until June/July 1986 (i.e. after the report on Phase 1 had been received). The proposal emphasises the production of 'flexible training modules' and 'support materials' for college-based modules. We understand that there were debates between the project director and FEU as to what extent the modules were free-standing, open learning, independent study modules. Our impression was that Phase 2 was proceeding in a logical and many-sided manner, with a significant amount of planning and support material being produced, and much time being spent on issues of staff development and national certification.

RP332 □ Learning to be a Group

- *Centre for Unemployment Studies, Wolverhampton Polytechnic*
- *January – December 1986*
- *£10,526*

In this project, FEU was adding its funding to a series of grants acquired since 1983 by the Centre for Unemployment Studies, and was seeking to extract from an existing programme of work a particular set of practical and disseminable outcomes.

Although this was an 'add-on' project, the objectives (outlined in the project information bulletin) seem ambitious for a one-year project employing a single full-time worker. They were 'to facilitate effective learning' among self-help learning groups of unemployed adults, encourage collaboration between these groups and educational agencies such as the Open University, radio and TV, and produce 'a manual with illustrative materials for the training (in adult and further education) of leaders and facilitators of the groups.' The project was designed in four stages which may be summarised as:

- literature search and visits;
- detailed study of groups in three different regions;
- testing of models of practice in facilitating groups;
- compilation of manual for practitioners.

The only groups with which the project was successfully in touch were those established by statutory agencies, i.e. outreach workers (often MSC or ESG) of further, adult education or other agencies. Therefore, they were 'self-help' groups of a particular kind. It is not clear whether stages III and IV of the project design (which are particularly demanding and ambitious) were carried out. Nor were we aware of any contacts with the educational media or the Open University

RP337 □ Access to Maths, Science and Technology

- *Open College of South London*
- *January 1986 – March 1987*
- *£15,998*

Only one-third of this project's FEU funding came from the REPLAN budget; the remainder was from other FEU budgets. The project's aims were to 'investigate the curricular implications' of the development of access courses in maths, science and technology and to consider problem areas, appropriate teaching/learning strategies, and effective staff development approaches.

The part-time project worker carried out a national survey, by postal questionnaire, of all FE colleges and HE institutions, to identify relevant access courses. Twenty-nine courses (12 in London) were identified (from 253 replies – a response rate in the region of 42%). The status of some of these as 'Access' courses appears to have been in question. Seven courses were identified for more detailed study, together with their 'linked higher education exits'. This consisted of document search, staff interviews and student questionnaires. Response rates were disappointing in some cases. A substantial report was produced by the project. It contains an interesting assembly of statistics and comments. The 'success rates' of adults passing from these 'Access' courses into higher education are mixed, but in this context what counts as a 'success rate' is a matter for debate and interpretation.

RP357 □ Supporting Unemployed Adults in Further Education

- *Stockton-Billingham Technical College*
- *April 1986 – December 1987*
- *£26,195*

An ambitious project that sought to develop a comprehensive strategy for the college with regard to the education and training of adults and to make a permanent impact upon the college. It aimed particularly to improve the quality of existing provision, reduce drop out, and develop additional provision with regard to the balance and relationship between specialist and mainstream provision, marketing and targeting, modes and location of delivery, guidance and accreditation.

There appears to have been a lengthy gap between project proposal and approval, which caused some operational problems at the start. A group of four members of staff (2 LIs, LII, SL) worked as a team on the project and also had some

responsibilities for initiatives such as Restart. There appears to have been some fruitful interaction between Restart and REPLAN.

The project operated according to an 'action plan' which consisted of:

- review of statistical data of students in college;
- multi-stage sample survey of unemployed students;
- proposals for new development including revised enrolment procedures, teaching materials, modes of assessment;
- implementation of new development, including staff development and monitoring.

During the fieldwork the plan appeared to be proceeding with some success. A relatively able student survey was followed by staff interviews and interviews with external key informants. The establishment of a computer file for analysis of surveys and enrolments, however, caused difficulties. Staff development exercises had been undertaken and various projects initiated (telephone advice line, enrolment interviews, outreach with community groups and course development, e.g. domestic appliance repair course).

Our impression was of a busy successful project which, however, had about nine months yet to run when we visited it.

RP358 □ Unemployed Graduates – A Wasted National Resource

- *University of Nottingham*
- *May 1986 – April 1987*
- *£18,892*

The idea for this project developed over several years from the earlier work of the proposers and, during the fieldwork, it was hoped that other agencies would fund a second curriculum development phase of the work. The aims of this phase were to define the scale and nature of unemployment and underemployment among graduates (under the age of 25 years) and to develop trial curriculum packages. Approval of the project was delayed for a few months because of doubts in some quarters about the appropriateness of funding work for graduates as a target group of the unemployed.

The actual starting date of the project was September 1986. One thousand graduates were surveyed about their perceptions of obstacles to employment. Some employers or graduates were also surveyed about their experiences of recruiting graduates and their views on graduates as employees. This survey had been only partially successful. From the start, the proposers evidently had clear ideas about the curriculum packages they wished to develop. They were called 'Workwise' and were to be designed for different stages of the undergraduate career and the period of unemployment after graduation. The FEU grant was particularly concerned with an 18-month curriculum package for graduates unemployed for a year.

This project seemed to have clear goals and all the marks of being able to achieve them.

RP383 □ Guidance in Personal Relationships for Unemployed Adults

- *National Marriage Guidance Council*
- *September 1986 – January 1988*
- *£6,781*

This project was the last in the evaluation brief to be funded and the fieldwork had only recently begun. An FEU development officer played a major role in establishing the project and helping to devise the methodology. The idea behind it was interesting and innovative but there were early fieldwork problems. The project director worked in Rugby, the part- time (one day per week) fieldworker was based in Bristol, and fieldwork took place in colleges in Bristol and Avon.

The aims of the project were to develop guidelines for educational guidance staff and teachers in adult and further education with regard to the effects of unemployment on personal and family relationships. Methodology was to include surveys of staff and unemployed students in six colleges. The project worker, not being an insider to the education system, found that much time was wasted in gaining access to the colleges and making sense of their culture and vocabulary. The methodology had, in fact, been adjusted since the beginning of the project. Moreover, carrying out any project on just one day per week was bound to cause problems in continuity.

FURTHER ANALYSES OF PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

During the course of our project meetings – summarising, reviewing and looking for general characteristics in the reports of the fieldworkers – we tried out various ways of giving numerical values to projects for purposes of comparison. Experimentally, and with reservations, we constructed tables which rated the progress towards objectives, gave scores for management efficiency and assessed benefit to unemployed people. It was possible to detail numbers of unemployed people who had directly benefited from some projects – but making inter-project comparisons was unfair because the objectives of some did not require them to be of direct benefit to quantities of unemployed people. All these attempts to arrive at numerical values were, in fact, largely rejected as spurious.

TABLE 8: ***Ratings of innovation and transferability by project cost***

Project	Innovation rating (I)	Transferability rating (T)	(I) + (T)	Project cost (£)
	*	*	**	***
A	4	7	11	H
B	5	6	11	H
C	4	6	10	M
D	7	7	14	V
E	7	6	13	H
F	6	8	14	H
G	7	7	14	H
H	7	8	15	S
I	7	4	11	E
J	4	5	9	M
K	8	9	17	L
L	4	5	9	L
M	2	3	5	M
N	7	6	13	M
O	4	4	8	S
P	5	8	13	M
Q	6	5	11	M
R	7	7	14	V
S	2	1	3	M
T	8	4	12	L

KEY * 10 point scale (1 = lowest point)
** 20 point scale (1 = lowest point)
*** 6 band scale

Project cost

	£k
E Exceptional	40+
V Very high	30 – 39
H High	20 – 29
M Medium	10 – 19
L Low	5 – 9
S Small	1 – 4

Table 8, however, is one such attempt which we have retained, mainly because it relates to the two basic FEU REPLAN criteria of 'innovation' and 'transferability'. In our project meetings we checked that all of us (three fieldworkers and director) had common formulations of the two concepts and that they were in line with our understanding of the FEU REPLAN criteria. The fieldworker most familiar with each project then gave a rating on each of the two criteria (10 point scale; 1 being the lowest point). The ratings were debated by the team and possibly modified. In cases of disagreement, the project director had the last word.

Table 8 (in which projects are not identified nor placed in any particular order) gives the values for 'innovation' and 'transferability' separately, sums them, and places them alongside the cost band in which a project falls according to its grant from the FEU. Table 9 provides an overview of these ratings by cost band. Table 9, then, is a quantification of a series of individual subjective (but also collective) judgements on somewhat inexact criteria; we do not want to claim much for it. However, it does confirm what common sense suggests – that a project may be more expensive, but that does not necessarily make it more innovative and/or transferable. There are many intervening variables.

TABLE 9: ***I + T ratings by cost band***

Cost band		Cost band £k	No. of cases	Mean I + T rating
Exceptional	(E)	40+	1	11
Very high	(V)	30 – 39	2	14
High	(H)	20 – 29	5	12
Medium	(M)	10 – 19	8	8.5
Low	(L)	5 – 9	3	12.7
Small	(S)	1 – 4	2	11.5

Before fieldwork visits, we sent to each of the projects in the evaluation brief a preliminary open-ended checklist which included questions about successes and difficulties to date. The checklist was primarily intended to initiate our contact with the projects and to form the basis of the fieldwork visits (see Appendix 2). It seemed worthwhile, however, to make some simple analyses of the responses as they are a form of self-report/self-analysis by the projects. At the time of the analysis we had 28 checklists returned by project directors and workers from 16 of the projects.

Table 10 (a) confirms our analysis in Table 5. FEU REPLAN projects are largely not targeted on specific groups of unemployed people. The table contains the replies of all respondents. It may be noted that, by adding references to 'working-class unemployed', 'unemployed women', etc. which were not in their project information bulletins, one or two respondents were illustrating the ways in which their projects had evolved.

Tables 10 (b), (c) and (d) contain the replies of one (the most senior) respondent per project.

Table 10 (b) shows that, unprompted, most respondents described the benefits for unemployed people from their project as being in the educational guidance and increased self-confidence/personal developmental areas. Table 10 (c) gives responses to the question about project successes and achievements so far. The references to changes in courses, provision and learning methods, and to collaboration with other agencies, seem worthy of note. Table 10 (d) shows that respondents differentiated between failures and difficulties. Failures related to inadequate progress, over-ambitious goals and faulty methodology, particularly in relation to making appropriate contact with unemployed people; difficulties were the lack of resources, time and institutional support which project workers were able to amplify for us in our fieldwork and which, in some cases, should not have been entirely unpredictable.

TABLE 10 (a): ***Analysis of project preliminary checklist***
Question: 'Who are the unemployed people benefiting ... from your project?'

General unemployed	*Long-term unemployed*	*Unemployed by age grouping*	*Other categories inc. graduates, women, special needs, ethnic minorities, working class, school failures, groups not normally participating in AE/FE*	*Others*
15	3	4	9	4

TABLE 10 (b): ***Analysis of preliminary checklist***
Question: 'How would you describe those benefits (for unemployed people from your project)?'

Access to information, guidance and counselling	*Personal development: stocktaking: increased confidence*	*New curricula*	*Progression*	*Other*
8	8	6	4	1

TABLE 10 (c): ***Analysis of preliminary checklist***
Question: 'What ... have been the successes and achievements of the project so far?'

Provision of counselling, advice and information	*Collaboration with other agencies*	*Dissemination*	*Changes in new courses/ provision/ methods*	*Awareness raising among clients*	*Benefits to clients*	*Other*
7	7	4	10	5	2	3

TABLE 10 (d): ***Analysis of preliminary checklist***
Question: 'What ... have been the failures and difficulties of the project so far?'

DIFFICULTIES						FAILURES	
Resources lack/ limited e.g. staff/ finance	*Support lack at local/ institutional level*	*Time lack of – e.g. part-time workers; delays*	*Clash of local and national interests*	*Dissemination problems*	*Other*	*Progress; pilot not carried through/ too much attempted/ no progress*	*Target group not reached; problems with research/ outreach*
6	5	7	4	3	5	5	5

3 EVALUATION OF AIMS

The aims of the FEU REPLAN 'programme of development projects' were said, in 1984, to be:

> *'to promote research and development projects for the adult unemployed. The essential features of this programme will be that projects are innovative, will be expected to produce lessons which are transferable, will result in a report for dissemination, and will focus on curriculum.'*

Table 8 is our crude numerical attempt to assess the 21 projects on the criteria of 'innovation' and 'transferability'. In Table 6 we showed that the project covered all parts of the FEU curriculum development model (in fact, some projects in themselves were concerned with all aspects of the model). In Table 7 we demonstrated that the projects also cover the five areas of the Watts/Knasel conceptual framework for the education and training of unemployed adults, but less evenly. There is more emphasis on employability, coping and leisure than on context and opportunity creation. In the descriptions of projects in the preceding chapter we probably say enough to indicate our view of the extent to which we think projects achieved their aims. In Chapter 5 we give a crude numerical assessment of the extent to which 16 projects have achieved the 'outcomes' originally agreed with FEU.

It is a mixed picture, but we judge it to be a satisfactory one. There are some high spots and one or two low ones, but all this activity falls within the framework of the general aims stated for the FEU REPLAN programme. That framework was established rather quickly in 1984, and has not been reconsidered since (as far as we know). It seems logical, however, to take stock of what has been achieved and to consider to what extent it can be built upon, amplified and used as a spring-board for new, and perhaps more closely focused, curriculum development projects.

With regard to final reports, at the end of March 1987, only two FEU REPLAN projects had resulted in full publications (RP203 and RP285). (We were also aware of *Retraining Adults* (1986), published under the FEU REPLAN imprint. The project concerned (based at Tile Hill College in Coventry, 1982 – 1984) was funded well before REPLAN started). However, Table 11 indicates the updated state of play of project completion and publication in December 1987, and takes account of the considerable FEU REPLAN publishing activity evident during 1987.

We read (including *Retraining Adults*) 13 FEU REPLAN final reports, in either finished or draft form, and several other interim reports. In our view, on the basis of these 13 reports alone, mixed as they are, there is a great deal that could now be written in a connected fashion about the education and training of adults, and about relevant curriculum design and development strategies. Even the reports which are less effective (and presumably will not be published) have something to say, especially if related to other reports. The outcomes of the FEU REPLAN programme as a whole merit further careful distillation, review and reconceptualisation.

Development officers can clearly have a major influence on the aims and structures of projects, although they may be mediating the recommendations of the members of the projects committee. There was reference to a 'painful negotiating phase' by one set of project workers. The degree of close involvement at this stage is such that development officers were perceived by one or two project workers, or so they said, to have changed the terms of reference of the project and 'added things to the project information bulletin'. Such views are largely misconceptions of a process of negotiation which ends in a contract between the FEU and the project proposers, and an agreed project information bulletin. The originators always have the option of not signing the contract (it is true, however, that some contracts were received after projects had begun). Nevertheless, we found some strange retrospective recollections of these processes in our fieldwork with projects. Even if the recollections are inaccurate or based on false premises, the fact that they exist is significant, and should not be ignored in any revision of procedures.

Despite the close involvement (giving advice, supporting, guiding) of the development officers at the initial phase, in which they may do a great deal to form the projects and get them under way, it is apparent from the fieldwork that some projects do start with uncertainty about their aims, methods and structure. We can identify some projects which had project information bulletins containing overambitious or unsure objectives and vague and uncertain methodology. We have traced instances in FEU files in which development officers raised questions about or objections to aspects of projects about to be approved, but we could not find that these questions or objections had been satisfactorily resolved. Indeed, in some cases, development officers' worries about a project proved later to be justified.

There is, here, something of a dilemma of interpretation. On the one hand, FEU project approval and start-up procedures seem to be thorough and stringent – certainly when compared to those of some other agencies; on the other, some things do slip through the net – the objectives and methodological plans of some projects should have been further refined before their work began.

After close involvement with a project at its beginning, the main vehicle for development officer contact is through attendance at steering committee meetings. If development officers are concerned about the directions that projects are taking, there may be additional contact (visits, telephone conversations, correspondence). Usually project staff complete an interim report and development officers can advise on the form, style and presentation. There may be further negotiations over finance – possibly concerning salary increases to project staff. Development officers may be involved in negotiations to extend the project – possibly because the writing of the report is behind schedule.

The fieldwork showed that project workers see the impact of development officers in this phase as ranging from 'very supportive' to 'we need to see more of our development officer', but most comments indicated that project workers felt that the development officer knew what was going on and could be contacted.

Our reading of project steering committee minutes shows the development officer role to be that of making constructive and questioning interventions, and giving consistent guidance in line with FEU REPLAN criteria. Unless we misread them, the minutes suggest that development

Table 11: ***Report outcomes of 21 projects***
(as in December 1987)

Project	Final report published	Final report to be published	Summary report published/to be published	Bulletin published/ to be published	Final report received
203	✓				
209					✓
232				✓	
242					✓
252	✓				
253					✓
254		✓			
266	✓				
267	✓				
273		✓			
285	✓				
295			✓		
296			✓		
303				✓	
321					
322				✓	
332		✓			
337		✓			
357					
358					✓
383					

We can point out – in summary form – some of the areas in which we think the FEU REPLAN programme has made progress, has something to say, and has shown its strengths:

- methods of identification of new areas of employment for which training could be provided;
- methods of curriculum design and implementation for training in new areas of employment for unemployed people;
- educational guidance and counselling for unemployed people;
- problems and issues in staff development for staff in education and training who are newly working with unemployed people;
- methods and materials for staff development for such staff;
- problems, issues and possible models in institutional education and training provision for unemployed people;
- nature, use and experience of special projects, units and programmes in energising educational provision for unemployed adults and in producing policy, attitudinal and institutional change;

- methods and relevance of needs analysis;
- methods and relevance of curriculum evaluation;
- methods and utility of establishing local networks of providers and interested parties concerned with the education, training and well-being of unemployed people.

The FEU REPLAN projects have shown that there is work yet to be done in some areas. In some cases the projects have not yet made any significant contribution. In others, they have made attempts, but not fully succeeded in achieving their objectives. The following merit further funding of good projects by the FEU:

- use of volunteers in educational work with unemployed people;
- outreach to unemployed adults with minimal educational experience and qualifications;
- negotiation with unemployed people over the content of the curriculum or the means of learning;
- establishment of satisfactory local schemes of educational progression for unemployed people;
- marketing strategies for education and training of unemployed people;
- collaboration between statutory and voluntary agencies in making provision for unemployed people;
- the assimilation of schemes of accreditation of prior learning for unemployed people to national and local schemes of formal qualification and accreditation.

Only a few FEU REPLAN projects (Table 5) so far have been targeted on specific groups of unemployed adults (e.g. women, ethnic minorities, young unemployed). Several participants in the advisory consultation were critical of this factor; they argued that unfocused curriculum design for 'the unemployed', or even the 'long-term unemployed', was likely to be less effective.

The problem with lists of target groups (e.g. Table 5 or pages 26 – 27 in Charnley, A.H. *et al.*, 1985) is that they are no more than lists and cut across so many different dimensions, e.g. age, sex, disability, ethnic origin, educational experience, geographical location and life experience. Our view is that any approch by the FEU to funding projects with specific targets should have some system to it and attempt to control, or limit, the factors or variables involved. It could decide quite logically, for example, to target on:

- unemployed people with different kinds of prior work experience (e.g. unskilled manual, semi-skilled, executive and professional, etc.)

or it could (in theory at least) look for curriculum development for:

- unemployed women with different levels of prior educational experience (e.g. literacy problems, no educational qualifications, ex-YTS, graduates, etc.).

Moreover, although it is evident that the FEU curriculum development model (see Appendix 5) functions well as a discipline and a framework within which projects can work, our review of the FEU REPLAN programme so far leaves us with the suspicion that the curriculum development model (despite its explicit references to the fact that '... FEU continues to interpret curriculum development very widely. It means far more than the design of syllabuses and their teaching ...') on its own does not push projects sufficiently into outreach and experimental modes of provision. Some of the participants in the advisory consultation

5 EVALUATION OF EFFICACY

This report has already argued that it is not possible at present to evaluate the efficacy of the FEU REPLAN projects in terms of their effects on the local context, the region, and the national situation. Effects may be short, medium or long term. Short-term effects may not come immediately to light; evidence on them may take time to interpret. The evaluation of efficacy should take place after a period of time has passed, perhaps even years. Ideally evidence would be collected throughout that period. That manifestly cannot be the case in this evaluation; therefore, what is said in this chapter must be regarded as interim and indicative rather than conclusive.

ADVISORY CONSULTATION

Those who attended our advisory consultation took considerable interest in the notions of transferability, local continuity and dissemination which are inherent in any discussion of the efficacy of FEU projects. There was no consensus; participants expressed a variety of views, both during the consultation itself and in the course of the telephone interviews which took place in the week preceding. Several of them found the notion of 'transferability' particularly problematic. The upshot of these points is not to reject the notion of transferability but to accept that it is used at a relatively general level and also, importantly, that 'transfer' to other colleges, authorities, or parts of the country may imply and include transfer to 'mainstream' local provision and/or some discernible local development, change or continuity of content of the project. One participant in the advisory consultation put it, rightly or wrongly, as: 'there needs to be a spin-off in terms of provision ... I have detected an unwillingness in the FEU to accept this'. Another participant argued (interestingly, although we think it was overstated) that unintended outcomes of a project could be as important as the intended ones. Successful or not, projects were likely to have staff development value for the participants and the staff whom the project touched. He urged:

> *'Any project like these has a lot of its value in the area as a staff development exercise ... it should have considerable catalytic action and change staff attitudes.'*

INTENDED OUTCOMES

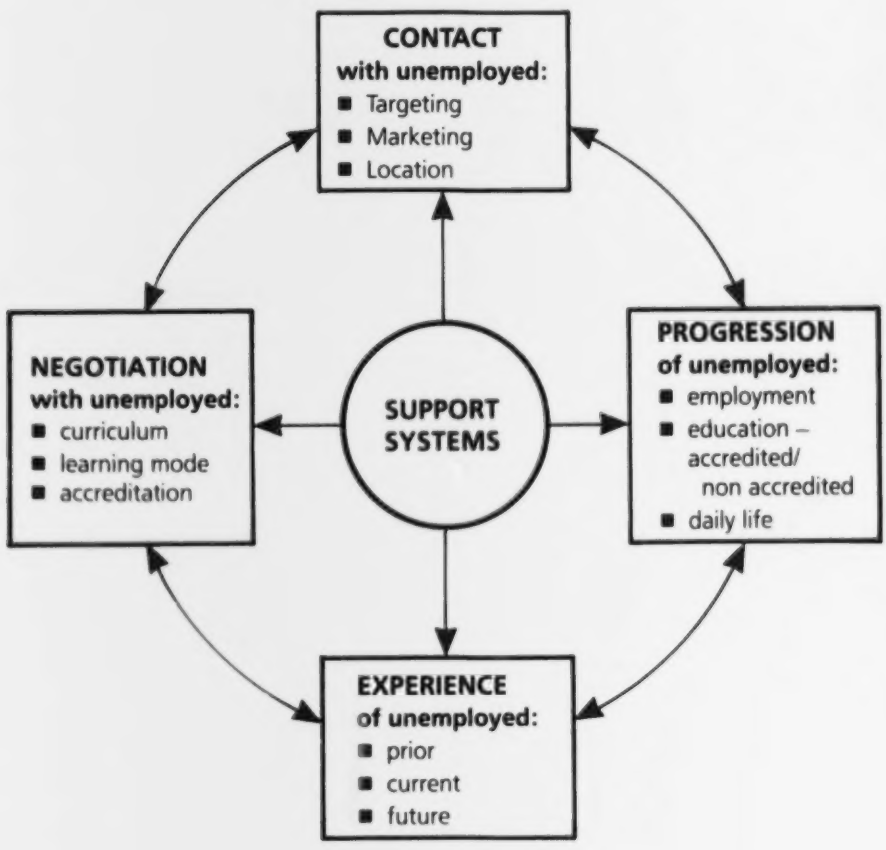
Chapter 2, which contains an analytical description of all 21 projects in our evaluation brief, gives some idea of both intended and unintended outcomes of the projects. However, although aware of having used a blunt numerical instrument, we analysed the outcomes listed in the project information bulletins of 16 projects which may be deemed to have finished their work and completed their time span, and we considered whether those outcomes had been achieved. The crudeness of this analysis will be apparent if one considers the different levels and precision of language in which outcomes are described in project information bulletins, and the subjectivity of the criteria by which we had to judge, in many cases, whether they had been achieved.

The analysis suggested that the 16 projects had between one and five intended outcomes, giving a total of 40 intended outcomes. Seven of the

commented on the 'sameness' of project methodology; mention was made of the value of community development approaches which did not result in 'provision' or 'courses'; one participant (perhaps exaggerating for effect) spoke of the methodology of one or two projects being 'old fashioned' compared with that of other non-educational work with unemployed people. Some participants suggested that FEU should look for ways to move on from projects which were 'curriculum-led' to others which would be 'outreach' and 'community based'.

Therefore, alongside the curriculum development model, we would want to urge FEU to develop some sort of model which would lay emphasis upon outreach and upon the features of curriculum planning and implementation which FEU experience so far suggests should now be explored. Something like the following might be developed:

MODEL: **Processes of Outreach**



The model seeks to draw attention to:

- the importance and difficulties of making **contact** with groups of unemployed people who are normally out of reach of the educational system;
- the relevance of giving unemployed people influence over what curriculum offerings are made to them through **negotiation**;
- the value of utilising and relating to the **experience** of unemployed people in designing and delivering the curriculum as well as in accrediting learning;
- the crucial need for ensuring that any educational experience for unemployed people is viewed in the context of what comes next and that educators pay particular attention to the opportunities for educational and other **progression**.

projects, in our judgement, achieved all their intended outcomes. In total, 24 of the 40 intended outcomes were achieved. Of course, such analysis does not discriminate between the outcomes not achieved, some of which were very minor. Nor does it give information on projects which were sufficiently dynamic to change with circumstances so that one achievable outcome replaced an intended outcome that was no longer relevant.

TRANSFERABILITY

In Table 8 we gave a numerical 'transferability rating', on a 10-point scale, to the 21 projects in our evaluation brief. We explained how we arrived at the numerical values and the limitations we ascribe to their reliability and use. It is worth repeating the numbers here in summary form. Using the 10-point scale with 1 as the lowest value (i.e. almost no 'transferability'), we calculated the following frequencies:

Ratio	Number of projects
10	0
9	1
8	3
7	4
6	4
5	3
4	2
3	3
2	0
1	1

The mean of these scores is 5.6. On the other hand, eight of these projects rate a score of seven or more.

We looked more closely at these eight projects and, in so doing, developed a simple framework of the kinds of transferable outcomes that could be associated with FEU REPLAN projects. Thus, the following might be transferable outcomes:

- particular courses, course development plans, course materials;
- particular techniques (e.g. of marketing, evaluation);
- strategies for the development of provision, e.g. in an institution or authority;
- knowledge, information about needs of unemployed people, etc.;
- in more general terms, inspiration, stimulus for other institutions to do likewise and develop provision.

We found that, of the eight projects which scored over seven on our 'transferability scale':

- six were characterised by us as concerned with general strategies;
- two were characterised by us as concerned with particular courses, etc.

SELF-RATING BY PROJECTS ON TRANSFERABILITY

In the preliminary checklist sent to projects, we asked, 'What, do you think, will other projects, programmes, schemes for unemployed people be able to learn from your project?' Sixteen projects made responses to this question, but the responses varied greatly. Only four statements/ ideas were mentioned by more than two projects:

4 EVALUATION OF EFFICIENCY

Whatever the ideas behind a project, whatever the general aims, agreed funding and planned duration, there are certain canons of efficiency in project operationalisation, management and general conduct which can be considered. This chapter is concerned with some of these – we did not comprehensively seek to enquire into all aspects during our fieldwork. For example, we chose not to ask in detail about the management of finance because we judged that it would be a particularly sensitive issue.

SELECTION, NEGOTIATION AND INITIAL PHASES OF PROJECTS

Investigation of the processes of selection of projects within the FEU was formally outside our brief, although we touch upon it later in this chapter.

It is worth commenting here, however, on the variability in the time taken to approve, notify and start up FEU projects. Some projects are approved and established, seemingly with haste; others take months; in one or two cases many months (and the proposers claim virtually to have forgotten about the project or to have 'given up hope'). The explanations for these delays are mixed and appear partly to relate to FEU internal procedures and partly to failures in communication within further education and other establishments. As one project informant told us:

> *'There was a great delay from our submission date to our actual starting date, partly due to the lack of communication between the FEU and the college, and between the principal and the project workers.'*

To these delays, and others relating to completion of the project information bulletin and the exchange of contracts, can be added FEU's sometimes expressed wish (particularly with an eye on the end of the financial year) to begin funding a project almost as soon as an institution has been told that its proposal has been successful. There was, in fact, no pattern. We were told that some projects would have made a less uncertain start if there had been, say, three months breathing space between project approval and project start for some preparatory work.

MANAGEMENT OF PROJECTS

In other sections of this chapter we make various comments which bear on the management of projects, e.g. the roles of project directors and steering committees, the selection and supervision of project staff and the relationship with FEU development officers.

Nevertheless, it is worth commenting here on the differences, related by project workers, over the management of project resources, clerical support and accommodation. FEU attempts to include adult education centres, smaller colleges and more traditional colleges among the recipients of its grants. It is possible that such institutions may have little experience of administering projects financed externally and this could

lead to some management problems not being anticipated. We found that levels of responsibility were not always clarified and so project workers were not always clear with whom responsibility lay. Sometimes project directors left decisions to project workers (who may not be permanent members of staff) who did not have the experience required to take them appropriately.

A number of project workers complained of inadequate clerical support. Workers on one project, all with degrees but no research experience, were not sure, at the outset of the project, about the extent of their clerical requirements, and greatly underestimated their actual needs. Another project had no clerical support organised and had to rely on the college 'pool'. Project workers reported 'lots of frustration' and 'phenomenal delays' (in the production of questionnaires, etc.).

We were told that management of finances was also a major problem for some projects. To quote one project worker:

> *'there was a great hassle when it came to releasing monies, especially over money available for hard expenses'; 'the resources borne by the college were inflexible and led to a great deal of wasted time, e.g. use of word processor, duplication'; 'the chief administrative officer had no idea of how much money was available and how it should be allocated'.*

In another project the project workers said they were 'never clear' about who was responsible for financial control. On occasions they had 'been out of pocket for expenses.'

SELECTION AND SUPERVISION OF PROJECT STAFF

Each FEU REPLAN project has a director and at least one project worker (full or part time). While the project director is generally a senior member of staff at an FE or HE institution, the project workers are not necessarily staff members of the host institution. The amount of expertise and relevant experience they possess seemed to us to vary considerably from project to project, as did their qualifications. We reviewed the information we had about the main staff of each project. We found that 75% were women and 55% part-time employees. At least 55% were graduates and 35% had spent at least six years on the staff of the host institution.

A part-time worker may or may not have another (e.g. lecturing) job. Eight projects had only part-time project workers. Of these, four had only one part-time project worker carrying out all the work. Informants on two of these projects told us, retrospectively, that it had been a mistake not to have a full-time worker and that progress was impaired by the lack of continuity inherent in part-time work.

In the majority of cases, project directors appeared to be self-selecting. The idea for the project originated from a member of staff of an FE or HE institution who subsequently assumed the role of project director. In one instance the impetus for a project came from the vice-principal of a college, but he was reluctant to take on the role of project director because of his wide-ranging responsibilities and heavy workload. He agreed, reluctantly, to act as project director only when it was clear that the other members of staff were unwilling to assume responsibility. It was a project which later proved to need closer supervision than usual.

There is a dilemma in the FEU policy to have relatively high-ranking personnel as directors of projects. On the one hand, it may ensure that the project is protected and supported within the institution. On the other, it does mean that project directors may be directors in name only and that either a project is not managed closely or a conscientious project worker is obliged *de facto* to take on the management role. We interviewed some project directors who were closely involved in their projects and contributed significantly, but we also came across some examples of 'distance' between directors and their projects. One director had only a poor idea of how the project worker functioned and seemed to have given her *carte blanche* to develop methodology as she saw fit. One project was without a director for some months because of a job change.

There can also be something of a dilemma over the appointment of project staff. Formally, FEU has no role; it has contracted with an institution for a job to be done and it is the institution's responsibility to appoint the appropriate staff. In our view, some inappropriate appointments have been made. In some cases, principals used the FEU funds as an opportunity to 'mothball' a problematic member of staff by means of a secondment; on one occasion, at least, such an instance was justified in terms of much-needed staff development for the staff member concerned. The staff member lacked the experience to do the job, but would learn it through the project. This seemed to us to be to the detriment of the FEU project.

We can also point to projects which were remarkably fortunate in the skills and commitment of their project staff. There are instances in which FEU money 'loosened up' the situation in a college; some prestige was attached to working with an FEU project, opportunities for career advancement were perceived and project staff worked hard and with imagination.

On the other hand, we know of two projects which did not go according to plan and there had been only one applicant for the post of project worker. In each case that person had been appointed.

It is questionable how effective the appointment of project staff to carry out surveys, 'research', and 'needs analysis' is if the appointees have no background in such areas of enquiry. Our analysis shows that 16 projects conducted surveys of some kind. In our view, some were conducted inadequately and were an unsound basis from which to develop curricula. Others, perhaps, did not justify the resources expended on them. We noted that one or two projects in FE colleges used consultants (e.g. from higher education) for advice and/or help in survey and evaluation work. This practice seemed to produce positive results.

In several projects, lack of experience with computers – crucial to the objectives of the project – was dealt with along the way (at least in part) by securing places on training courses or by organising special training. However, inevitable delays were caused to the project's timetable.

Of course, work with long-term unemployed people requires sensitivity and understanding. This is particularly true of workers who interview unemployed people (for survey purposes), or advise or 'counsel' them. We were interested to note that a project committed to recruiting volunteers for such work with unemployed people created a relatively stringent selection and training process through which volunteers were sifted before they were free to interview unemployed people. Indeed,

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

VALUE FOR MONEY

Certainly we feel able to say that, taken as a whole, the FEU REPLAN programme represents value for money. Of course, there is no fixed standard by which one can make such a judgement. It depends partly on what one is comparing the FEU REPLAN programme to. We think, on the basis of the detailed accounts and analyses given in this report, that it is possible to claim that the FEU REPLAN programme would stand comparison with other programmes in the adult education and training field and, indeed, with other FEU programmes.

In summary, we have said (Chapter 2) that, taken separately, the 21 FEU REPLAN projects in our evaluation brief have a mixed record. There are some notably successful projects (successful by any criteria) and some which had over-ambitious objectives, operational problems, flawed methodology, reports not suitable for wide dissemination, or some combination of these factors. If one bears in mind that, as a matter of conscious policy, the FEU sought to distribute at least some of its REPLAN money to institutions in the further education system and elsewhere which did not have a history of receiving such external grants, then the mixed record of projects is no surprise. We have indicated some bureaucratic delays (both in the FEU and in the receiving institutions) in the initial phases of projects, but have generally shown satisfactorily high standards of management and monitoring being normally maintained by the FEU in running its REPLAN programme, despite the extended nature of development officers' workloads. Certainly all these 21 FEU REPLAN projects have some outcomes which are of general value.

In Chapter 3 we indicated that, as far as the evaluation of aims is concerned, the 21 projects (taken as a whole) have made a number of advances in curriculum development in the education and training of unemployed adults. We want to pick out here our findings that one of the strengths of the programme has been 'the nature, use and experience of special projects, units and programmes in energising educational provision for unemployed adults and in producing policy, attitudinal and institutional change'. We can associate, too, comments on institutional staff development and local networks and the later analysis of projects with transferable outcomes as often those concerned with strategies for the development of provision. Furthermore, in Chapter 3, we urged strongly that some future FEU REPLAN projects should be concerned more closely with outreach to unemployed people and with associated issues of making successful contact with them, negotiation of curricula, valuing their experience and providing progression.

We think, however, that these conclusions need to be kept under review by the FEU as its various REPLAN projects are completed and their reports presented. The gradual accumulation of experience and knowledge should directly affect the future shape of the FEU REPLAN project programme.

Chapter 4 goes into considerable detail on the evaluation of efficiency based on the findings of our fieldwork. It emphasises the pivotal roles of project directors and FEU development officers, the significant (and

workers on some projects emphasised to us that educational work with unemployed people could be very difficult indeed – 'clients could eat you alive'; 'not all clients are malleable, pleasant, helpful people'.

There were one or two FEU project workers who found this aspect of the work problematic. One, who referred to herself as 'a middle-class researcher', had great difficulties in 'accosting' (her word) working-class men for a street survey. Conversely, one or two workers became very personally involved in students' problems and one of them at least – according to her report – seems to have found herself in the position of not being able 'to see the wood for the trees'.

In one project, the director spoke of part-time staff who were 'difficult', partly because they had been 'inherited' from another project. In another project, director and project worker were strong personalities and clashed on occasions. The worker claimed to be working against, rather than with, the director at times. Of course, these problems will arise. We think, however, that externally funded, short-term projects such as FEU REPLAN may be particularly prone to such tensions; some project staff are on short-term contracts with uncertain futures and in positions marginal to host institutions, some are stressed by work with unemployed people and some troubled by working to deadlines with pressure to produce outcomes, including the 'practical' outcomes preferred by FEU.

The implications of these observations seem to us to be that FEU projects should be tightly managed, have realistic objectives and work to detailed but achievable timetables which are regularly reassessed.

ROLE OF STEERING COMMITTEES

One of the first duties of the project team is to form a steering committee. FEU expects this and expects, too, that the committee should meet at stipulated intervals, usually quarterly or termly. FEU suggests that the committee be chaired by a person of some standing (e.g. the principal of a college) to ensure that the project has local/institutional status and support. The relevant FEU development officer always attends steering committees, unless unavoidably prevented from doing so.

Hypothetically, project steering committees fulfil a number of roles, and these can be grouped as:

- MANAGING: this can comprise a general overseeing and controlling role, ensuring that the work is carried out effectively in accordance with the project information bulletin.
- MONITORING: to ensure that objectives are being carried through and met.
- POLICY MAKING: to discuss changes in policy/direction.
- ADVISING: to give advice, guidance and information to the project, drawing upon the experience and expertise of members.
- SUPPORTING: to maintain morale, encourage, give positive feedback.
- LIAISING: members of the committee can, through their contacts, spread information about the project and offer advice and information about useful contacts and resources.

It appears from our fieldwork that FEU REPLAN project steering committees (although they have different titles, e.g. 'support' or 'advisory group', 'research committee') may fulfil all these roles to a greater or lesser extent, and are more likely to emphasise the monitoring and advisory roles.

The size of REPLAN steering committees varied from 6 to 20, with a rough average of 9 or 10. The actual attendance was usually less than the listed membership (one project listed 30, with 17 attending) and no clear pattern emerged. The size of the committee and the turnover of members seemed greater in the larger projects. One project, with an average attendance of 6.6, had 17 members with frequent changes.

In some projects, project staff told us (retrospectively) that, in their view at least, the steering committee composition had been wrong. In one project, representatives of one key area of the community ('key' to the objectives of the project) were not included in the committee at its outset, but the omission was later rectified. In another project, concerned with the evaluation of two sponsored vocational courses which included job placements, there were no employers' or Jobcentre representatives and the sponsor's representative did not normally attend. On the other hand, we were impressed by the width of membership of some committees and the presence of some well-known 'national' names among attending members.

In terms of the influence of committees, the staff of one complex project felt that their committee lacked 'political clout'; it appeared that 'messages' from the committee were not passed on to the appropriate local authority committees, LEA officers and local councillors. Other projects had local councillors on their committees. In one project, the directors referred proudly to the 'strength and experience' of their committee, which included a former Under Secretary at the Department of Employment, the head of a careers service, a university professor and representatives from the CBI and the NUS.

The first steering committee meeting of FEU REPLAN projects is often used to clarify details on the project information bulletin. In one case it appears that the project title was, in effect, changed and, because the project objectives were considered too broad, the scope more tightly focused. In another project a change of focus (to tutors rather than students) was agreed at the second meeting.

Examples of project steering committees filling an advisory role included a project in which the committee debated the project worker's relative lack of success in reaching the target group of unemployed, and suggested a whole range of new outreach approaches which might be tried. In the event, the worker did not succeed in carrying out the suggestions. Various committees discussed the contents of survey instruments prior to use. (We thought good points were made but not always taken on board.)

Examples of project steering committees filling the supportive role include one in which a member undertook the survey work and wrote over 50% of the final report. The research expertise of the chairperson of the committee of another project provided valuable assistance to the project worker. We saw in the minutes that various members volunteered to take on tasks, e.g. search literature.

Committees, however, can be a source of difficulties for project staff – according to the perceptions of the staff. This may be particularly so if a project has a number of different institutional sponsors and, thus, different interests are represented on the committee. One project worker reported herself as 'harassed and hindered' by the different perceptions and demands of the committee at the report writing stage. The report has been revised 'six times'. Another project worker claimed to have realised that each person on the committee had a 'different perception of what we were trying to achieve and a different approach ... it tended to make one lose confidence somehow'. There have already been three changes (due to job changes) in the personnel of this recently formed committee.

We observed that, in more complex projects with sponsors or interested parties additional to the FEU, the steering committee (although formally briefed to deal only with project business) might provide a forum in which the various interests could discuss matters which went beyond the FEU's concerns. This, potentially, could squeeze time available for project business, but was clearly otherwise valuable to inter-agency co-operation.

Minutes of project steering committees were generally well kept and easily comprehensible. Evidently, steering committees varied in their degrees of formality and in keeping to strict agenda. We were fascinated by the steering committees of a couple of projects; their minutes reveal that at times they took on the nature of postgraduate seminars discussing, for example, the theory and practice of educational outreach to working class unemployed or the nature of reality in educational research.

We have no doubt that steering committees have an important role in FEU projects. What that role is will depend on the nature of the project, the range of tasks it has to carry out, and the particular skills and involvements of project director and project workers. All projects should have steering committees, despite the apparent and hidden resource costs. It is worth considering whether steering committees might be made even more useful to projects.

It may be that steering committees, or their individual members, could be involved more in project development between the quarterly (or so) face-to-face meetings of the committee. Projects might profitably use more of the resources and expertise that individual committee members represent. But this involves project workers keeping committee members well informed more regularly and more fully than quarterly committee minutes will do, and generating a sense of involvement in the project, for example by telephone conference calls which do not require the face-to-face meeting of busy people who live in different parts of the country.

PROJECT RESEARCH, NEEDS ANALYSIS, SURVEYS, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

As suggested above, in our view some project surveys were not conducted adequately, and some cost (in resource and time) more than they were worth. Surveys were often undertaken by workers without relevant experience or training – in other words, there was a misperception of the expertise required.

We do not want to dwell on these cases or dissect examples. We did, of course, come across some well-executed and solid investigations and one highly sophisticated one (probably more sophisticated than was needed).

There was considerable similarity in much of the 'needs analysis' undertaken across the projects. Moreover, a relatively common deficiency of much of this work was that investigators did not acknowledge (and sometimes did not realise) the limited validity of what they had 'found'. The links between 'needs analysis' and 'curriculum design' were either not spelled out or were sometimes reported in a deficient manner.

We think that this element in future FEU REPLAN projects and the implementation of this area of the FEU curriculum development model, needs some rethinking. The problem lies partly in the way project workers conceptualise needs analysis and surveying 'what the clients want'. By encouraging needs analysis, development officers are often doing no more than suggesting to projects that they familiarise themselves with their territory and approach their objectives systematically and thoughtfully with inputs from as many different sources as possible. Partly, too, the problem is that project workers have over-restricted notions of the range of investigatory tools available to them. There are projects in which a random series of unstructured conversations with local unemployed people, for example, if conducted with sensitivity and awareness, could yield information and insights with more validity for curriculum design than many weeks of project work spent in constructing, administering and analysing a questionnaire survey. Partly, also, the problem is that survey work is carried out without clear ideas about how the results are to be used. Quantities of data accumulate and are not analysed; reports are written but without a forum in which they can be heard; results emerge but are rejected because the crucial audiences have not been socialised into accepting the relevance of the research process.

With regard to a quite separate area – the monitoring of progress and the continuous evaluation of progress towards the achievement of objectives – we did not find many projects which were exemplars of good practice. Self-monitoring by projects is additional and more detailed than the monitoring which steering committees and FEU development officers can carry out, and should always be done.

Only in nine projects did we find examples of self-monitoring, and five of these had run courses (normally pilots) and evaluated them in one form or another. A few projects held regular (monthly, bi-monthly) meetings of staff involved, or of participants of various kinds, to review and discuss progress and provide mutual support. Some contained staff development sessions, exercises and workshops, and these could be a form of project monitoring. In one project we were told that 'staff development sessions were seen as a means of all involved – project officer and course tutors – meeting to discuss progress and problems'.

We found few examples of systematic records or diaries of project progress. One project worker told us that, after the event, she wished that she had kept a diary 'to show the real amount of time spent'. One project, which provided a service to the public, was sporadic in its record keeping – 'maybe we ought to do more monitoring, we did in the early days'. We were told, 'there just isn't time to do everything they wanted us to do on this project'.

REPORT WRITING

It seems that, for many project workers, producing a final report proved difficult; for some, the most difficult part of the project. Our general conclusion was that there were sometimes misperceptions of what was expected of projects.

A number of project workers cited lack of experience as a major obstacle to producing the final report – 'we need more guidance – some of us have not written for years'.

Writing often took far longer than anticipated – one project worker's report was quoted as 'dragging at the moment' and another, we were told, developed 'writers' block' and was incapable of finishing the report without help. Some project workers expressed doubts to us about the target audience for their reports – the FEU, further or higher education providers and policy-makers, or other practitioners in the field. We heard comments such as 'there's a contradiction between us doing a project report we'd learn from and writing a report for the FEU', and 'who is our report aimed at – colleges of further education or the unemployed themselves?'. There was a convergent perception that the FEU wanted 'practitioners' manuals; how-to-do-it guides'.

Some project workers expressed concern about having to omit (at least in their perception) parts of their report which dealt with the more qualitative side of their research in the interests of aspects which might be more 'transferable' or 'generalisable'. One experienced considerable difficulty with report writing for this reason. Another reported the belief that the FEU 'does not want local problems to be highlighted'; while yet another urged on us the view that it is a matter of judgement which local issues are 'relevant for other institutions – there's a fine line between what's generalisable and what isn't'.

Once a final report had been completed, the FEU development officer concerned with the project would read it, make written comments, and pass it to relevant FEU colleagues for comment. Eventually, the develoment officer would write summary comments – in the form of a cover note – to the FEU deputy chief officer. These notes might or might not be seen by the project workers – there seemed to be no hard-and-fast rule. The deputy chief officer might add comments or recommendations before passing the report on to the FEU project committee – a sub-committee of the board of management – which would make a decision about publication. After decision by the committee, the editing process was the responsibility of the development officer and a professional editor. Project reports not published in full might be published in summary form or outlined in an FEU bulletin.

The view of the project workers was that once the final reports had been submitted (and the initial sense of relief had subsided), they would welcome an early indication of how their report had been received. One submitted his report in September 1985 and claimed to be still unclear about its reception by the FEU in January 1987. They had heard that the report had been widely circulated among FEU staff, but views expressed about it varied across the spectrum from favourable to unfavourable. We checked and found that, apparently, the original report was extensively edited by the development officer and a third draft went to the projects committee in November 1986. It was still being worked on by an FEU development officer in February 1987.

We discussed the question of final report writing with various development officers. On the whole, we found them aware of the problems experienced by project workers and both restrained and tolerant in their perceptions of what constituted the ideal final report. One told us that shorter reports would be desirable; another that 'people can't get the idea that we want transferable methods, staff development models ... publication is only an outside chance'. In the minutes of steering committees, we found FEU development officers explaining to project workers that final reports should be 'practical', 'useful to the field', 'readable', 'not concerned with methodology for its own sake' and 'not overlong'.

Some project workers had said to us that a set of FEU guidelines on report writing would have been valuable. Ironically, we found that such a set was available (although it is not very detailed); but no project worker referred to having used it. Most project workers agreed that the development officers had kept a close and helpful watch on report writing and we did, in fact, find that development officers had a coherent view of their roles in this matter. For example, it was quite clear from the minutes of many steering committees that FEU development officers were looking for the disseminable outcomes of a project at an early stage; they developed concrete notions of what could, and what could not, be utilisable in a final report and either explicitly or implicitly sought to shape project activity and project workers' resolves, in the appropriate direction.

Several report writers complained of the pressure they had felt, and of report writing 'getting in the way of other things' in the project. We were interested to learn that, while some project officers claimed to have been obliged to omit from their reports local colour and details of interest, development officers spoke of their experience of having to encourage some report writers to include such material in the body of their reports in order to make them 'readable' and the context comprehensible to readers elsewhere in the country.

An important recent development in which two projects (at least, to our knowledge) had been involved were project report editing conferences in which the development officer, project workers, members of the steering committee and others were present. Some of those involved told us that they felt this public editing process could be 'bruising' and 'very painful', but that being exposed to the criticism of others was, on the whole, a most helpful process. Having to justify conclusions, according to one project director, 'ensured a deeper awareness of the project officer's work in the minds of practitioners, officers and elected members'.

Our conclusions are that what FEU development officers wanted from project officers' final reports are not arbitrary, made sense and should not be changed. They could, perhaps, look for shorter reports and (as some participants in the advisory consultation urged on us) other report formats (e.g. audio and video tape presentations). The problems seemed to us to be rather those of communication; FEU does not successfully communicate to report writers what is desired or – as important – does not succeed in negotiating their agreement on what is desired. We think that the development of revised notes of guidance on this matter and making available completed reports of other project workers (even if not published) should remove most of these communication difficulties.

One project director put it as we would want to put it: 'It is possible to produce a final report that meets FEU requirements without being merely prescriptive. It's a matter of the extent to which you can balance a number of objectives'.

ROLE OF FEU DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

We can identify five FEU development officers who have, since 1984, been involved in the programme of REPLAN projects. They are all people of considerable experience and commitment. We were surprised, nevertheless, at the wide range of time-consuming tasks in which development officers are engaged – these, of course, extend far beyond REPLAN into other FEU activities.

As far as we could tell, development officers spend/have spent between 20 and 50% (notionally) of their time on REPLAN and REPLAN dissemination activities. They are involved throughout the REPLAN project – from initiating or responding to the idea for the project, to overseeing the presentation and dissemination (in whatever form) of the final report.

In the early stages, development officers are often involved in initiating projects (possibly by building upon existing contacts with colleagues in the field, or by developing their own ideas and looking for likely agencies which might make a proposal) or responding to ideas from the field. This is the time when ideas and aims are clarified and methods, resource implications, and outcomes considered and refined. There can be one or more meetings with a range of personnel (college principals, LEA representatives, heads of departments, lecturers).

Development officers notionally produce draft project information bulletins. In the early stages they may be involved in much negotiation over the size of the grant (including, sometimes, protracted negotiations with the host institution); and giving advice on such matters as methods, timetables and evaluation, on such FEU concerns as curriculum development, staff development, transferability and dissemination, and upon the formation of a steering committee.

It seems that there was some pressure on development officers to get the REPLAN programme under way in early 1984. Some of the early REPLAN projects were already begun (or even virtually complete) and were subsequently designated as REPLAN after being identified as suitable by development officers. In the case of one project, we were told by the ex-director that he and the development officer concerned 'worked on it for six months' in order to shape it to fit the new REPLAN framework.

officers are perceived to some extent as authority figures and their views are deferred to. An important question for us is to what extent there is appropriate follow-up to, and action on, the views and decisions recorded in these meetings, and to what extent development officers check on that follow-up and action. As far as we can tell, there was variance between projects on this factor.

Of course, in the final stages of a project, development officers can be heavily involved in assisting with the writing of reports, including ensuring that reports are written in an appropriate form and style and ensuring that the content relates as much as possible to main FEU concerns (such as innovation and transferability). Apart from reading and commenting upon reports, and submitting them with appropriate advice to the projects committee, development officers appear to have been required, on occasions, to undertake substantial redrafting of some parts of reports. We identified at least six projects with reports that are, or have been, problematic in some way. (At the time of writing many projects were not yet at the report stage.)

- how to establish/improve an information/educational guidance service for adults;
- ways of working that will meet the needs of unemployed people;
- that curriculum development must be associated with staff development;
- the need for responsiveness and capacity for rapid change in rigid FE structures in order to make suitable provision for the varied client groups of the unemployed.

Other statements/ideas mentioned by two projects were:

- that meeting the needs of unemployed clients *is* possible;
- improved understanding of the needs of unemployed people will be achieved through feedback from clients;
- the pitfalls and subsequent frustrations caused by early mistakes;
- marketing strategies;
- the need for adequate resources.

Other statements/ideas were put forward by single projects (and are too many to list); three merit full quotation:

- 'the need for access, inside college, to "influential" people to enable/facilitate';
- 'the costs and benefits of carrying out this type of research in an adult education department primarily concerned with the practicalities of providing courses for a client group, as opposed to a more academically oriented college or university';
- 'need for convergence of views on outcomes with FEU ... need for greater discussion of dissemination of findings between ... (project) and FEU, especially on forms additional to the conventional report'.

LOCAL CONTINUITY AND EFFICACY

We have only limited solid information on the local continuity and effect of projects, that is to say, the extent to which the local authority, host institution and neighbouring colleges will continue to maintain an FEU REPLAN course or strategy, will adopt its project recommendations, or will be changed by the outcomes of an FEU project. In several cases, decisions appeared to be pending at the time we were writing our report. In a number of local situations there had been significant changes to the context of the project (e.g. in the college or local authority) during its lifetime. It would require an evaluation study much more sophisticated than this one to disentangle, with certainty, the effects of an FEU project from the effects of a city-wide reorganisation, a major change in Training Agency policy or a college restructuring.

Nevertheless, the signs look good in many cases. What seems clear is that the outcomes in terms of local continuity, effect and transferability may not be what the FEU expected or the project information bulletin predicted, and may be less tangible and measurable than had been hoped for. Several project informants, for example, told us that the FEU grant had 'bought time for thinking', 'enabled us to redirect', 'changed the atmosphere', 'enabled us to take a long, hard look at ourselves', and 'helped us to get some information together'. Such claims are not easily provable, although we can say that we understood what was being said from our knowledge of the contexts.

It is clear, too, that in some further education colleges and adult education centres an FEU grant has a currency other than its monetary value. It brings status and, potentially, a certain sort of power. An FEU project

within a college is 'different', 'something out of the ordinary', 'possibly of national importance'. It is perceived to have been won (whether this is true or not does not matter) in a sort of national competition. Therefore, the very presence of an FEU grant draws attention to the unit or group of staff which holds it (and possibly improves their bargaining power). It also draws attention to provision for the unemployed and the significance of that provision.

We think that we could claim that four or five of the institutions/local authorities holding FEU REPLAN project grants in our brief had undergone major changes in orientation to educational work with unemployed people during the lifetime of the FEU projects. We cannot say that the FEU project was the only or even the major causal factor, but we can say that the project and its outcomes contributed. They mattered. We can say that a further eight or nine projects (say 40%) enabled colleges or institutions to make significant changes to, assessment of, or experiments in, their education and training provision for unemployed people. Add to these one or two projects that had no local orientation, and one or two on which we feel we do not have sufficient information, and the overall impact is highly satisfactory.

DISSEMINATION

With regard to dissemination, we were struck by a number of claims put to us by project informants and by the convergence of views on a number of points. Seven or eight projects emphasised having been involved in local, regional, even national dissemination activities from the very beginning. This might involve being asked to speak at seminars or REPLAN conferences, and to visit other institutions; more likely it would mean answering requests for information about the project or about provision for unemployed people, and receiving visitors. One project officer in the south wrote, when returning his preliminary checklist:

> *'The constant requests for assistance have created difficulties and stretched my time considerably. I have had people coming here from as wide afield as Cornwall, Stoke, Sheffield, Hull, Lancashire, etc., etc. and been invited to give seminars and so on. Obviously, though positive in one sense, it can cause difficulties.'*

Evidently FEU information systems make FEU REPLAN projects well known throughout many of the relevant networks.

It follows from our discussion of the writing of reports that many project workers raised doubts about the medium of an FEU report (and its summary form, a bulletin) as the most effective vehicle for dissemination. Use of audio-visual presentations, for example, was suggested (although this would have to be planned from the start of a project); so, too, were the production of flexible staff development materials, the formation of regional 'travelling workshops' of experienced former FEU REPLAN project workers to share their experience with colleagues working (not necessarily on FEU projects) with unemployed people. Some project workers (and some participants in the advisory consultation) asked why there were not stronger links between FEU REPLAN and the networks of ESG and NIACE REPLAN workers in the education and training of unemployed adults.

varied) roles of steering committees, and the crucial importance of appropriate selection and supervision of project staff. A range of observations are made about the survey and research exercises undertaken by projects and the nature and conditions of reporting and report writing. In other words, a broad profile of factors needs to be considered in evaluating the efficiency of these projects and we are clear that FEU now has sufficient accumulated experience to be able to guide future projects so that pitfalls are avoided and more secure outcomes guaranteed.

In Chapter 5, we made some cautious claims on the evaluation of efficacy of the FEU REPLAN programme to date. More time will have to pass before we can draw confident conclusions about effects locally or nationally. However, we claim that four or five FEU REPLAN projects appear to have made contributions to major local changes in educational work with unemployed people, and a further eight or nine projects made possible significant assessment of, development of, or experimentation in such work. Further, several projects appear to have been involved in regional and national dissemination from their very inception – whether intended or not. We think the FEU should take note of this latter factor and recognise it in some projects as one of their necessary outcomes.

In terms of value for money, then, one ought to put all the foregoing summary remarks in the context of our analysis that the 21 projects in our evaluation brief cost approximately £374,000. That figure excludes costs of dissemination and publication (and does not include FEU-related direct costs such as those of development officers and advisory committees). We understand that the FEU REPLAN budget is approximately £200,000 per annum, but this is not all available for projects, and only a minor part is for new projects.

It is indicative that, in 1986/87, the FEU REPLAN budget was signficantly underspent. We attribute this to the rigorous manner in which FEU negotiates and eventually funds projects. However, we cannot exclude the thought that sufficient promising proposals are not forthcoming from or being stimulated in the field.

CONTEXT OF FEU REPLAN

It was completely outside our brief to investigate in any way the REPLAN projects managed by NIACE and the activities of REPLAN ESG workers. However, we were struck by the separate nature of the two arms (FEU and NIACE) of the REPLAN initiative. In some parts of the country, there appeared to be closer communication and co-operation than in others; in some there appeared to be very little. Some FEU projects carried on their work in virtual isolation from other projects concerned with unemployed people, whether FEU, NIACE or other. Projects seem to have welcomed the first, 1986, FEU Madingley conference for project directors and workers so positively for just this reason.

It did seem to us that closer communication and co-operation between these various projects and agencies with common objectives could only be of benefit.

It seems worthwhile to make a point about the terminology of the FEU REPLAN programme. We have the impression that the funding of 'projects' (and documents framed in such terms that they refer always to the funding of 'projects') may supply a certain convergence to the proposals which are forthcoming. Indeed, the criteria document suggests a range of parameters which gives 'projects' a relatively inflexible format. More important, within a host institution, the description of an innovation as a 'project' may imply (without the intention being there) connotations of 'experiment', 'temporary', 'an attempt'.

It is not a crucial point, but we propose that in future the terminology should become a little looser and more open-ended and perhaps refer to 'projects, developments and programmes of innovation'.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The final report of the Lancaster evaluation was a lengthy document directed at FEU officers and committees. This publication is an abbreviated and partly rewritten version of that report. In general, FEU received the report with interest and approval and assimilated its observations and recommendations into the process of review of the REPLAN programme which was under way from April to July 1987.

The Lancaster report contained twelve recommendations to the FEU, most of which, at the time of writing (December 1987), have been implemented in whole or in part. The report recommended that the FEU's complex document *Criteria for REPLAN* and the little used *Notes of Guidance for Projects* should be revised. This has been done and the latter is now known as *Guidelines for Project Management*. The report recommended that the FEU should 'take a clear view and be proactive in the selection, initiation and negotiation of projects' and 'in the selection and support of projects ... pay particular attention to' several factors, including:

'(i) grantees and project directors with a proven track record;

(ii) adequate time for groundwork between confirmation of grant and start of project;

(iii) adequate procedures for selection and supervision of staff;

(iv) adequate procedures for self-monitoring.'

By the end of 1987, it was evident that the FEU had, indeed, become more proactive in its REPLAN project initiation – seeking, for example, consultants and reseachers to undertake work on 'Supporting Restart' and 'Supporting The Open College' and, latterly, considering the sponsoring of work on the implementation of REPLAN work in differing institutional settings. The Lancaster report recommended the appointment of external consultants or 'mentors' to certain projects – there are now cases where this has been done; it advised that FEU's adult unemployment sub-group (with enhanced membership) should take on an extended role in supporting and advising development officers on REPLAN – this recommendation, too, has been implemented. The report urged that the completed FEU projects taken together have made a not unimportant contribution to the stock of knowledge on the education and training of unemployed adults, and this contribution should be written up in a critical and analytical manner; it also urged that the FEU look for ways of promoting better communication between all aspects of REPLAN, particularly with NIACE. At the time of writing, there are signs of the latter taking place; interestingly, there is in prospect a joint FEU/NIACE project briefed to overview the outcomes of the two REPLAN programmes for which they are separately responsible. The Lancaster report advised that 'the terminology of projects should be replaced by, or understood to mean, something a little more open-ended, e.g. "projects, developments, programmes of innovation"' and that FEU REPLAN should 'incorporate new forms of dissemination' both during and after the completion of a project (e.g. using project personnel and audio-visual techniques). Time will tell whether these recommendations become embedded in the FEU REPLAN programme. Currently the dissemination for FEU REPLAN is under consideration.

The Lancaster report, then, was aimed at (and to some extent taken note of by) FEU. Does it have anything to say to those 'in the field', to workers, managers, policy-makers concerned with the education and training of unemployed adults? That is for them to judge. It may, indeed, be that the comments in Chapter 4 on the efficient operation of FEU REPLAN projects have general applicability to most educational work with adults, whether unemployed or not, particularly if that work is subject to short-term funding. The positive outcomes from FEU REPLAN projects seem heartening; they demonstrate that small, short-term projects with limited finance can provide the space for critical reflection on experience or for the accumulation of new experience based on critical reflection. Of course, it would be better from most points of view if educational work with unemployed adults was financially in long-term mainstream funding and not subject to the vagaries of competitive bidding, current educational watchwords and jargon, staff discontinuities and project termination. However, if educational work with unemployed adults were indeed supported by larger and more permanent financial largesse, it is not clear that we yet know, in terms of educational and curricular development, how best the money should be spent. Most unemployed adults primarily want jobs; education and training – if countenanced at all – are secondary and intermediary. The three-plus years of curriculum development for unemployed adults under the FEU REPLAN programme so far has not changed that situation; indeed, it has raised more questions than it has supplied answers.

Education and training are not panaceas for the larger social issues, such as unemployment and poverty, which are of multi-layered complexity. Put bluntly, 'courses' in colleges and centres have scarcely any connection with the subjective reality of most unemployed adults from manual occupations who left school at the earliest opportunity. Earlier in this report we emphasised the importance of 'outreach' educational work as a possible cornerstone of the FEU REPLAN programme for the future – but the terminology of 'outreach' does come close to that of unexamined jargon unless clarified by focused experience, systematically evaluated. Future parts of the FEU REPLAN programme will need to investigate means and rationales for reaching out to the large segments of the unemployed who are cut off by experience, opportunity and conscious will from the world of formally provided education and training. In so doing, the programme will have to confront the central dilemma of continuing education: that the human condition requires adults of all social contexts and classes, consciously or not, to be learning and relearning new knowledge, skills and attitudes as they adapt to new life stages and circumstances in a changing world. Yet most do so without the attentions of the profession of educators.

POSTSCRIPT

Although this report (in its original, rather longer version) was presented to FEU in late April 1987, the commissioning date of the latest project to be included in the evaluation brief was September 1986. Between then and December 1987, 22 new REPLAN projects were commissioned or commissioned in principle by FEU, thus doubling the number of REPLAN projects since 1984. About half these new projects were commissioned before the writing of our final report.

These new projects bring the grand total of FEU REPLAN projects to 43 and their cost to (approximately) £738,347. This amount is projected to fund approximately 692 project months – a rough average of £1,060 per project month. The geographical distribution of projects is shown in Table 12. There has been a marked shift northwards in the geographical base of FEU-funded projects (cf. Table 1). This is even more marked if projects directed by FEU development officers and carried out by consultants are removed from the London and SE figures.

Table 12: *Location of 43 projects*

London and South East	14
West Midlands	5
South West	4
East Midlands	5
North East	10
North West	4
Wales	1

In the later phase of FEU REPLAN projects there is a tendency to longer projects (about 24 months) and more projects targeted on specific groups of unemployed people (deaf, women, black, mentally ill).

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The CCPR Community Sports Leaders Award (RP203) 1986
Preparing Adults (RP252) 1987
Supporting Restart? (RP434) 1987
Listening to You ... Listening to Us (RP266) 1987
Anxious to Work (RP267) 1987

APPENDICES

FULL LIST OF FEU REPLAN PROJECTS IN LANCASTER EVALUATION BRIEF

FEU project (RP) no.	Short title	Grantee	Funds from FEU £	Period of grant
203	Community Sports Leaders Award	Southwark Institute	1,674	3 months
209	Dissemination of information for disabled	INSET Southwark	2,500	2 months
232	Curricula strategies for unemployed adults	Project Fullemploy	14,175	15 months
242	Interactive guidance package	Council for Educational Technology	43,700	18 months
252	Needs analysis, counselling and development in MSC provision	Grimsby College	7,652	9 months
253	Guidance centre for the unemployed	Handsworth Technical College	30,105	12 months
254	Evaluation of an alternative programme	Hinckley College	11,627	24 months
266	FACET: Further Adult Continuing Education and Training	Kings Heath Institute, Birmingham	27,500	24 months
267	Improving guidance and provision in a major city	Basford Hall College, Nottingham	18,466	24 months
273	Assessment of ... Return to Learn courses	WEA	25,000	24 months
285	Unemployment and the FE curriculum	NICEC	8,500	7 months
295	Training in caravan, camping and self-catering parks	Evesham College	16,340	12 months
296	Unwaged adults in their 40s and 50s	Thames Polytechnic	14,808	24 months
303	Curriculum for long-term and itinerant unemployed	Dorset LEA	21,123	18 months
321	Skills assessment and vocational guidance	Avon LEA	30,819	24 months
322	Phase 1: Analysis of training needs in leisure industries Phase 2: Flexible training packages for operatives	North Warwickshire College	5,000 17,884	4 months 12 months
332	Learning to be a group	Wolverhampton Polytechnic	10,526	12 months
337	Access to maths, science and technology	Open College of South London	15,998	15 months
347	Unemployed adults in negotiated learning groups	North Manchester Community Education	Discontinued	
357	Supporting the unemployed in FE	Stockton-Billingham Technical College	26,195	18 months
358	Unemployed graduates	Nottingham University	18,892	18 months
383	Guidance in personal relationships	National Marriage Guidance Council	6,781	15 months

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

Outline discussions over an evaluation of FEU REPLAN took place during summer 1986 between Martin Johnson of the FEU and Keith Percy of the University of Lancaster (also a member of FEU's advisory committee on the education and training of adults). Detailed proposals were put together in September 1986 and final approval of the project received by early November 1986.

Dr Peter Ward was appointed as a full-time project officer between late November 1986 and end of March 1987. Joan Machell was appointed as a full-time project officer between 1 January and 31 March 1987 and Alison Graddon as a part-time project officer (20 hours per week) between 1 January and 28 February 1987. Keith Percy was director of the project. All three project workers had worked for Keith Percy before on various continuing education research and development projects.

The project was to be concerned with the 22 FEU REPLAN projects funded by September 1986. One of these projects, RP347, was discontinued in late 1986 and, therefore, excluded from fieldwork. RP285 (the Watts/Knasel study) was also excluded from fieldwork because of its special nature (but it nevertheless remained integral to this evaluation).

The fieldwork was planned to include at least one visit to each of the twenty projects. Normally a project officer visited alone, and became the member of the evaluation project 'responsible' for all contacts and reporting on that particular project. Seven projects (RP266, 267, 273, 296, 322, 357, 358) were selected by the FEU development officers for more intensive fieldwork, and second visits were made to these and other projects as required.

Preparations for the fieldwork commenced in December 1986, with letters and preliminary checklists despatched to project directors with requests for relevant documents, interim and final reports, minutes, etc. Telephone calls were then made to project directors/project workers (as appropriate) to arrange visits. Although the fieldwork was inevitably delayed by the Christmas period, three visits were arranged before the holiday with the remainder for January and early February.

On their return from the visits, project workers completed notes in a standard format under headings such as: Aims, Background, Context, Personnel, Method, Outcome, Summary (referring to such topics as: views of the participants – including, when possible, unemployed people themselves, dissemination, staff development, etc.). These notes were then photocopied and distributed to members of the project team, and regular team meetings took place to discuss and review the findings.

Although visits to projects were completed by the week ending on 6 March, the gathering of reports, minutes and pro formas, and consultations via the telephone, continued towards the end of the month.

In the early part of December, interviews were carried out with present and past FEU development officers. Members of the evaluation team also visited FEU twice to study a selection of project files.

The brief for the evaluation project included comments by an 'expert' group on the outcomes of the FEU REPLAN programme, and this advisory consultation took place on 9 March with 21 people in attendance (including FEU development officers and evaluation project staff). The majority of those attending were interviewed by telephone in the week preceding the advisory consultation and their responses used as a basis for some of the discussions on 9 March.

The discussions of the advisory consultation inform many of the judgements made throughout this final report. The list of participants in the advisory consultation is shown in Appendix 4.

Keith Percy and two project officers were present throughout FEU's REPLAN project conference at Madingley Hall, Cambridge, on 12 – 13 March 1987, at which 12 REPLAN projects were represented (including six in this project's brief). Interim findings were fed back to projects at Madingley, and some of the resultant discussion has influenced commentary and recommendations in this report.

Towards the end of the project there were further discussions with FEU development officers about feasibility of recommendations.

The adult unemployment sub-group of the FEU's advisory committee on the education and training of adults (with additional members) acted as the steering committee for the project and met five times in that capacity (including once at Lancaster). Membership of the steering committee may be found in Appendix 3.

PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE

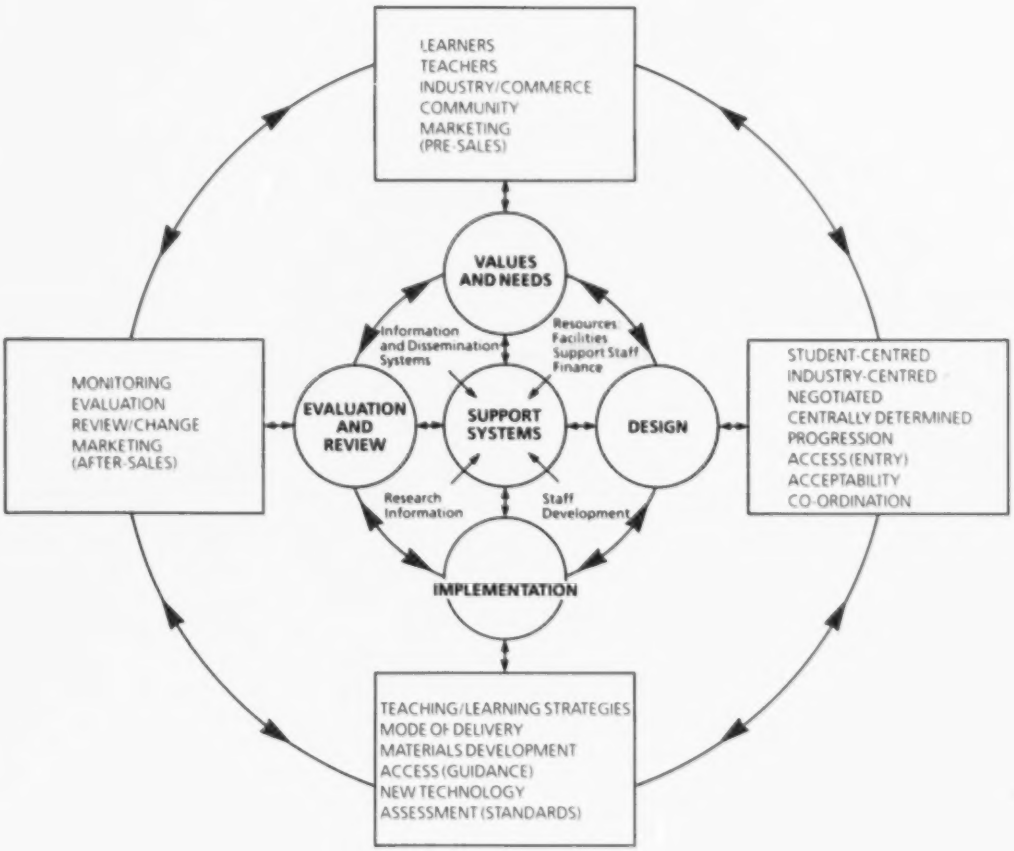
Maggie Chadwick, *Oxford College of Further Education*
Peter Fulford-Jones, *DES*
Pat Gale, *NIACE REPLAN*
Lucia Jones, *NATFHE*
John Steel, *HMI*
Gordon Stokes, *Southend College of Technology*
David Towler, *MSC*
Philip Barnard, *FEU (until 31 December 1986)*
Martin Johnson, *FEU*
Elizabeth Weightman, *FEU (from 1 January 1987)*
Keith Percy, *University of Lancaster (Project Director)*

FEU REPLAN EVALUATION ADVISORY CONSULTATION

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Diane Andrews	*TUC*
Jonathan Brown	*National Association of Educational Guidance Services*
Ian Bryant	*University of Southampton*
Anne Evans	*Manchester Polytechnic*
Ray Flude	*Melton Mowbray College of Further Education*
Pat Gale	*REPLAN Field Officer (NE)*
Colin Griffin	*Hillcroft College*
Brian Groombridge	*University of London*
Andy Hawkins	*MSC (FE Adviser)*
David Hibbert	*HMI*
Stephen Hopwood	*NCVO*
John Hurley	*Gloucester College*
Tom Irwin	*Kirklees LEA*
Harry Mitchell	*Newcastle Polytechnic*
Martin Johnson Elizabeth Weightman	*FEU development officers*
Alison Graddon Joan Machell Keith Percy Peter Ward	*FEU REPLAN evaluation project* *University of Lancaster*

FEU CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT MODEL



The model shows that the FEU continues to interpret **curriculum development** very widely. It means far more than the design of syllabuses and their teaching. Like all 'models' it oversimplifies the situation.

Thus for any one of the main FEU activity areas, most if not all of the processes shown in the diagram apply. The basic 'development' processes of **analysis of needs – design – implementation – evaluation and review** will be familiar to many. The model shows how they all need a *support* system if they are to be sustained.

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OBJECTIVES

The objectives for which **The Further Education Unit (FEU)** is established are to promote, encourage and develop the efficient provision of further education in the United Kingdom and for that purpose.

a) to review and evaluate the range of existing further education curricula and programmes and to identify overlap, duplication, deficiencies and inconsistencies therein;

b) to determine priorities for action to improve the provision of further education and to make recommendations as to how such improvements can be effected;

c) to carry out studies in further education and to support investigations of and experimentation in, and the development of, further education curricula and to contribute to and assist in the evaluation of initiatives in further education;

d) to disseminate and publish, and to assist in the dissemination and publication of, information about recommendations for and experiments and developments in further educations.